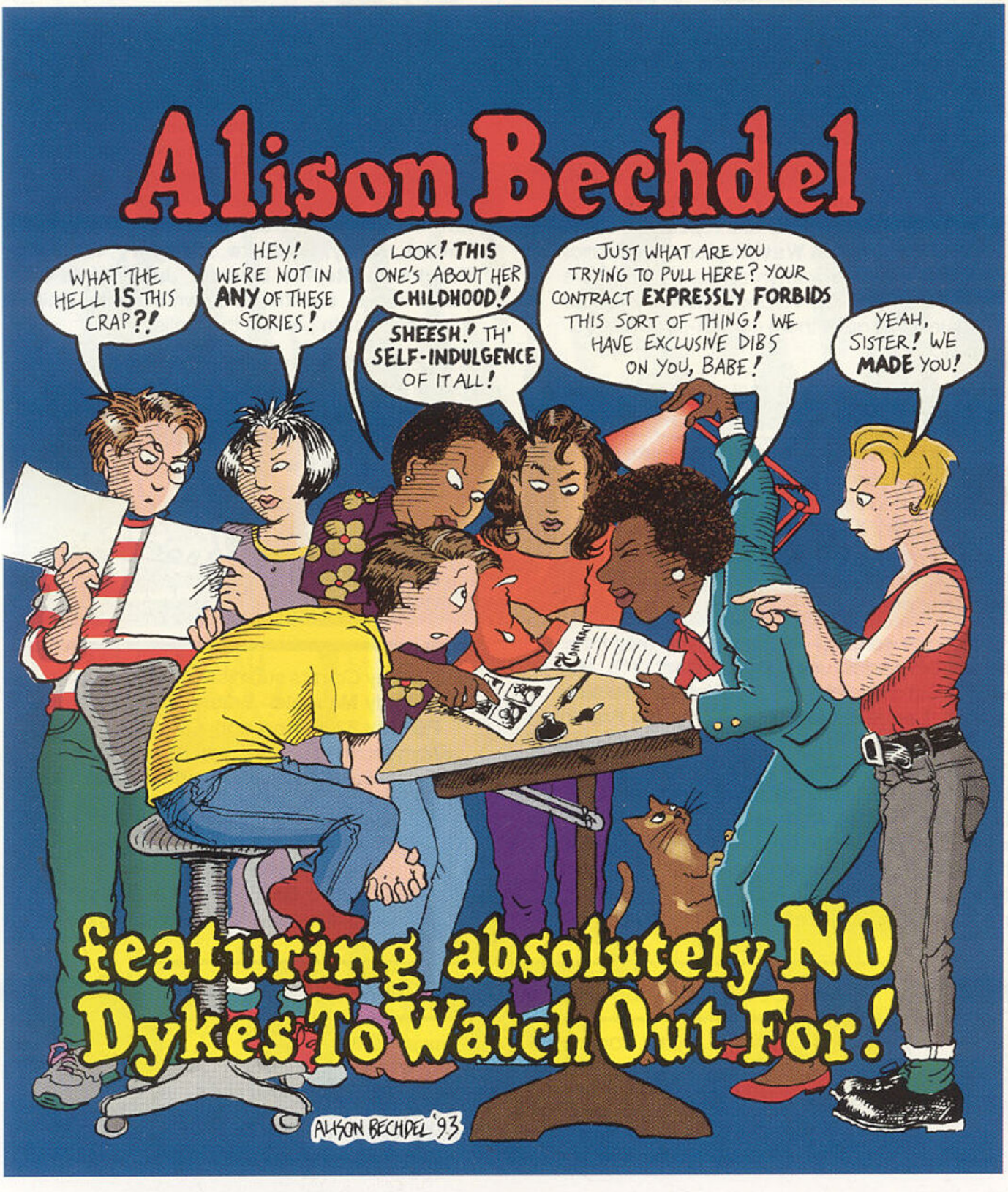
EARLY SUMMER 1993

GAY comics #19

$2.95

MATURE READERS



FROM THE EDITOR

GAY COMICS #19: Early Summer 1993

edited by Andy Mangels

Welcome back to *Gay Comics*, and our long-awaited much-anticipated **Alison Bechdel** Special!

Alison is one of the most famous lesbian cartoonists of the 20th Century. Her popular *Dykes To Watch Out For* serial runs in newspapers around the world. When I approached Alison to do an issue of *Gay Comics*, she asked if I wanted a *Dykes To Watch Out For* story. I told her I'd prefer to see some new stories non-related to her epic work, and she gave a sigh of thanks. Seems she's been wanting to spread her artistic wings out some more, and this was giving her the perfect chance to do so. Hence came the half-joking title that this is the *"No Dykes To Watch Out For Special!"*

Speaking of "no dykes," I'd like to speak to many of you who are joining us for the first time, brought on by Alison's talent and reputation. I was stunned at a **March on Washington** *Gay Comics* signing when several women asked me why there were no lesbian comics. I proudly showed them our back issues and gave them our not-so secret editorial policy:

Gay Comics has **50%** material by women in **every** issue!

When I became editor, I wanted to make it clear that there would be no sexual inequality in my book. Thus, with the exception of special issues like our previous *Leonard & Larry Special* by **Tim Barela**, and this issue by Alison, all regular *Gay Comics* will have exactly 50% material by women/womyn/womon/wimmin/wimyn.

Who are some of the names you may have missed from past issues? **Donna Barr** (#15, 16), **Jennifer Camper** (#14, 15, 17), **Rhonda Dicksion** (#15-17), **Leslie Ewing** (#14, 17), **Julie Franki** (#17,18), **Leanne Franson** (#18), **Diana Green** (#18), **Roberta Gregory** (#14-17), **Joan Hilty** (#14, 18), **Kris Kovick** (#17), **Julia Lacquement** (#18), **J.D. March** (#14, 18), **Andrea Natalie** (#14-16, 18), **Jackie Randall** (#14, 16, 18), **Laura Rebecca** (#18), **Cheela Smith** (#17) **Noreen Stevens** (#14, 15), and **Linda Sue Welch** (#18). Plus, March On Washington cartoon art in *Gay Comics* #17 from **Fish**, **Dianne DiMassa**, **Diane Germain**, **Nicole Ferentz**, and **Alisa Gordaneer.**

I'll ask *you* : Where are the lesbian/bisexual/women cartoonists?

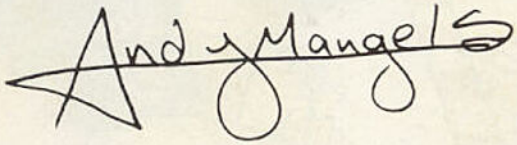
If you *haven't* been reading, you've been *missing* them.

But, of course, there are ways to correct that mistake. Below you'll find information about ordering back issues, and about submitting your own work.

Next issue, later this Summer, be here for our second SuperHero theme issue, with surprises galore! Under covers by **J.A. Fludd**, comic master **George Pérez**, and **Julie Franki**, you'll thrill to the adventures of the queerest heroes of them all. **Jennifer Camper**, **Kurt Erichsen**, **Joan Hilty**, **Robert Kirby**, **Roberta Gregory**, **Howard Stangroom**, **Stephen Lowther**, **Julie Franki**, **J.A. Fludd**, myself, and Ireland's own **Malachy Covey** and **Sean Doran** provide the thrills!

Coming down the pike in the future is another special with half of the issue by **Roberta Gregory** and half by **P. Craig Russell** and **David Sexton**. Plus, watch for our "Funny Animal" issue with an *Omaha, The Cat Dancer* cross-over! Yowza!

Please, Keep Loving!



Send *Gay Comics* submissions and letters to :
Andy Mangels - Editor, Gay Comics
PO Box 3226, Portland, OR, 97208-3226
Submission responses may take a long time.
Always include a phone number.

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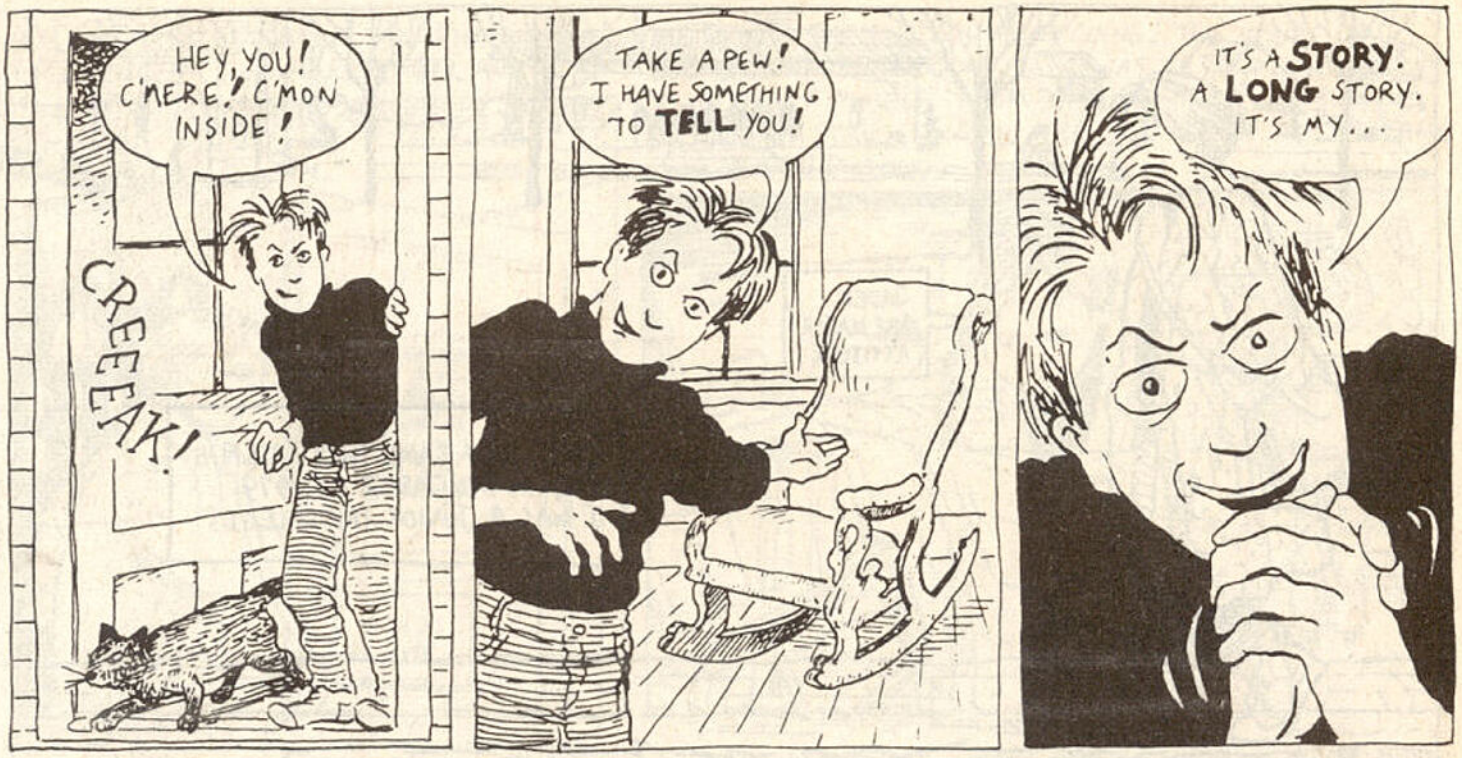
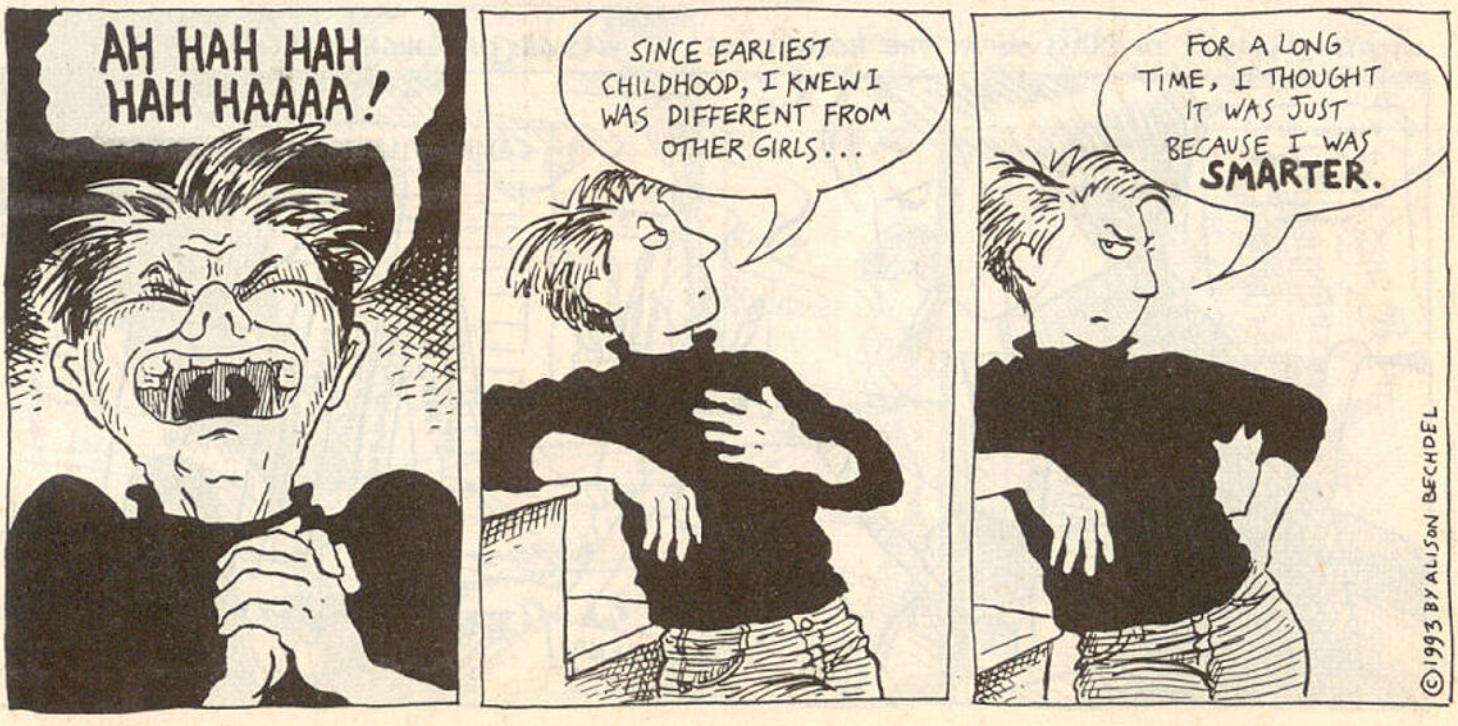


COMING OUT STORY



JADED ART MAJOR ATTITUDE

BUT THEN CAME THAT FATEFUL DAY IN NOVEMBER OF 1979. I WAS A JUNIOR IN COLLEGE.

I HAD JUST BEEN BROWSING AT THE CAMPUS BOOKSTORE, SOMETHING I DID A LOT OF IN THOSE DAYS.

I WAS LONELY, A NEW TRANSFER STUDENT. BEING ENTIRELY ASEXUAL, APOLITICAL, AND ASOCIAL, I HADN'T MADE MANY FRIENDS YET.

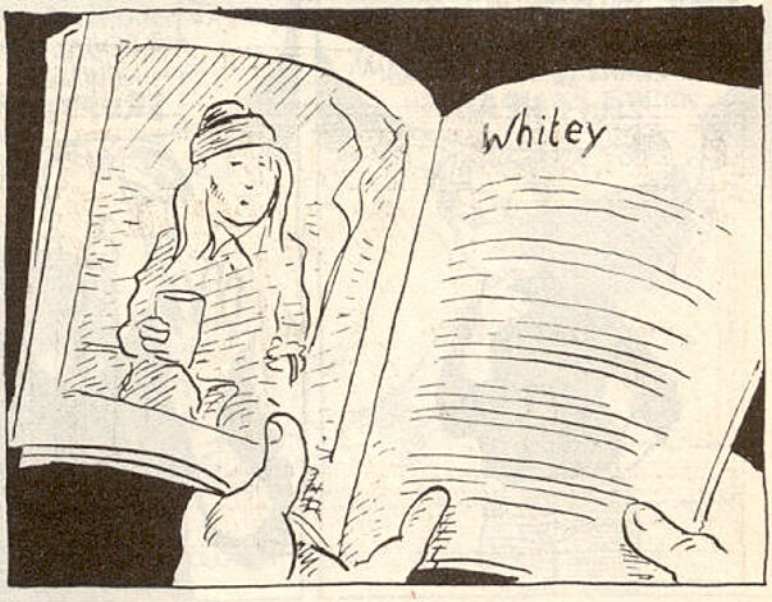
WHEN I WASN'T IN CLASS OR AT THE BOOKSTORE, I WAS GETTING HIGH AND GOING TO MOVIES.

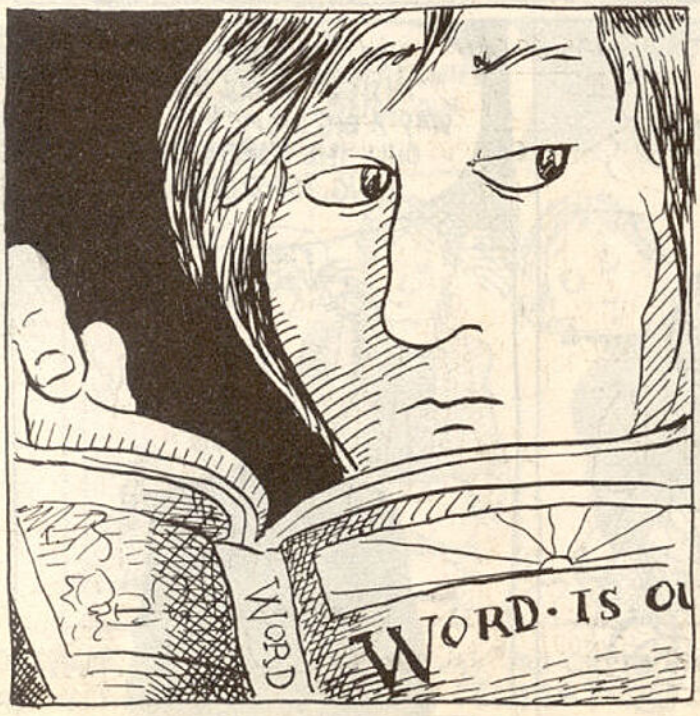
MY CINEMATIC EDUCATION WOULD HAVE BEEN EXCELLENT IF I COULD REMEMBER ANY OF IT.

THE DRUGS, THE ENDLESS MOVIEGOING, THE HOURS OF BROWSING THROUGH BOOKS... I WAS TRYING DESPERATELY TO DISTRACT MYSELF FROM A TRUTH THAT WAS SLOWLY BUT SURELY STRUGGLING TO THE SURFACE OF MY SOLITARY, SEX-STARVED SOUL.

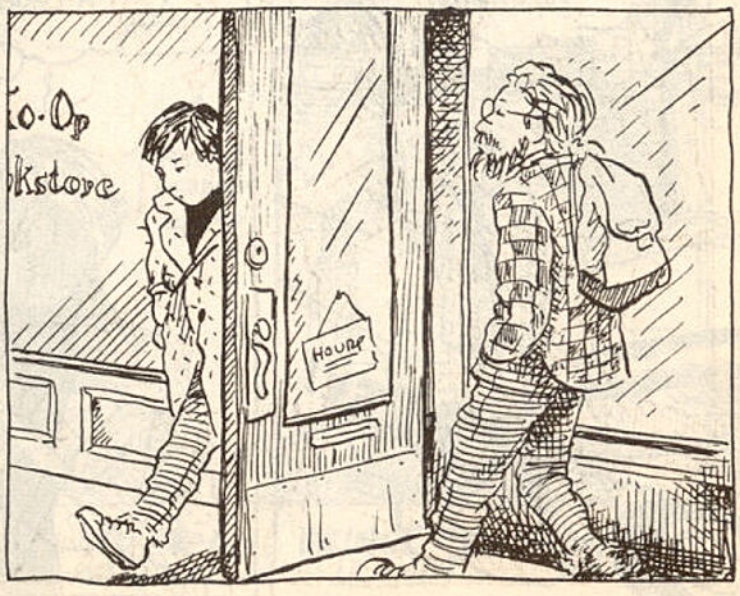
ONE OF THE BOOKS I CHANCED TO FLIP THROUGH THAT PARTICULAR GRAY AFTERNOON WAS "ABOUT HOMOSEXUALS," AS I LATER NOTED IN MY JOURNAL.

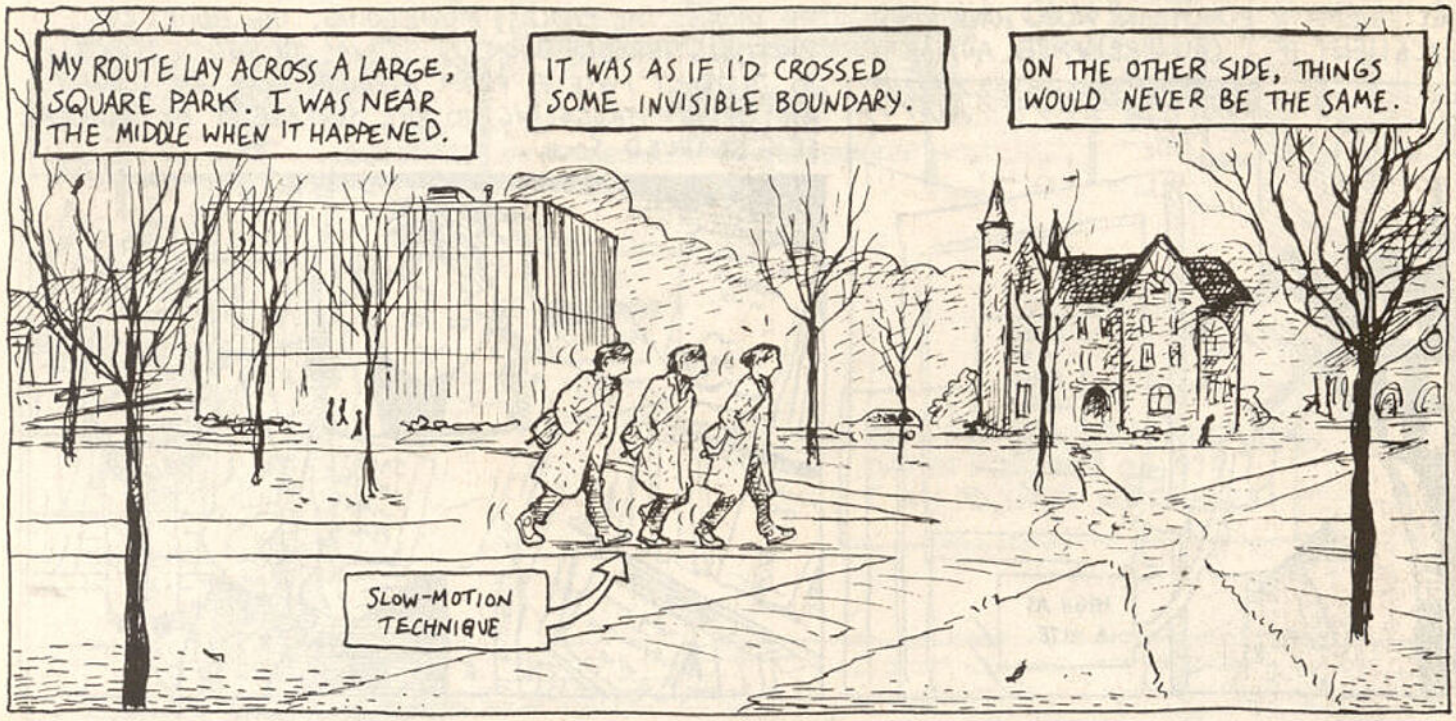
VARIOUS PEOPLE WERE INTERVIEWED ABOUT HOW THEY HAD COME TO REALIZE THEY WERE GAY, AND WHAT THEIR LIVES WERE LIKE.



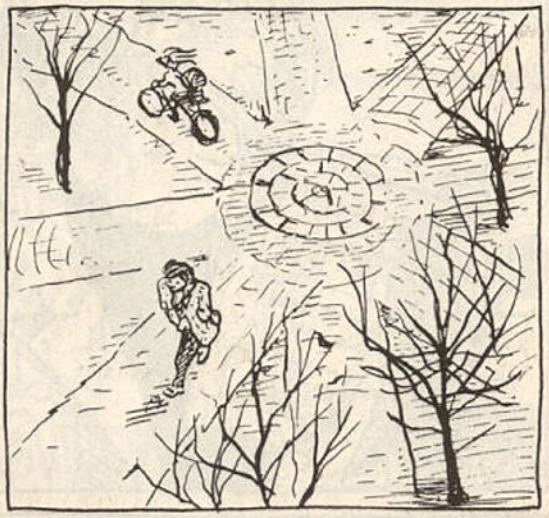


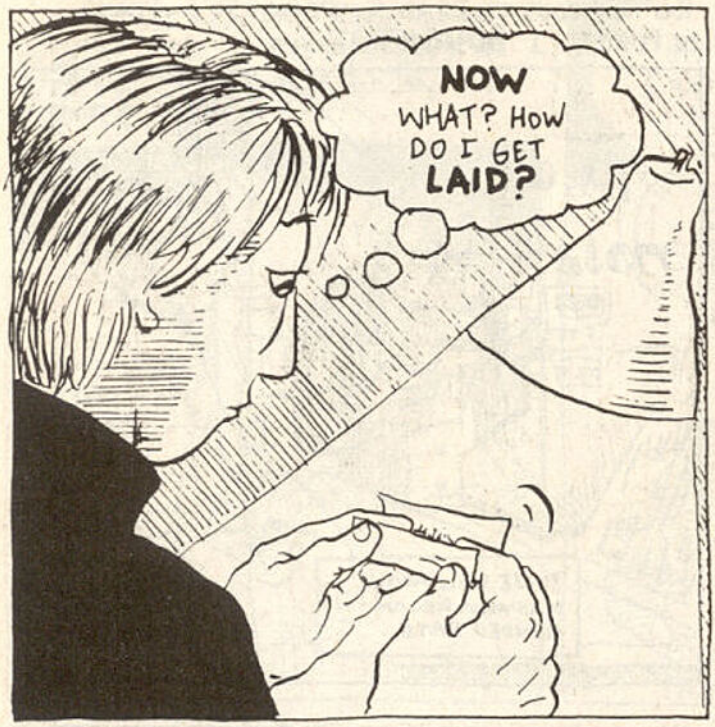
I READ FOR A WHILE, THEN AT MY USUAL TIME I LEFT THE BOOKSTORE AND HEADED BACK TO MY DORM.





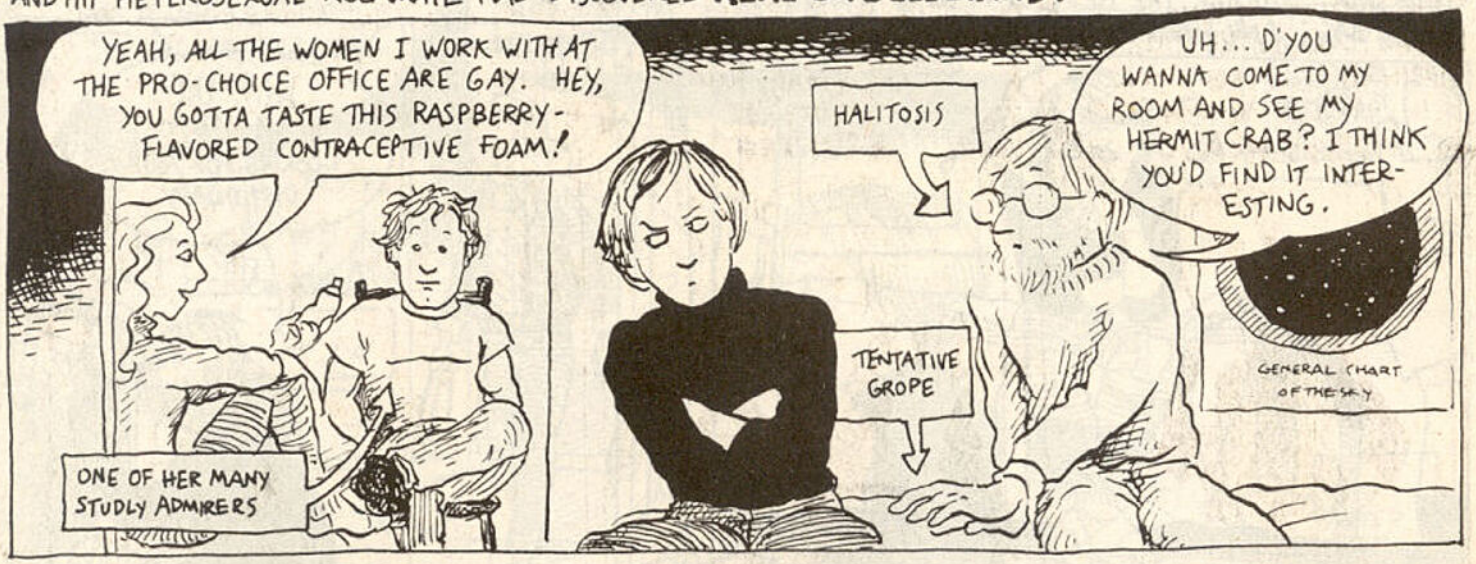
BY THE TIME I EMERGED FROM THE PARK, MY ENTIRE CONFUSING LIFE HAD PASSED BEFORE MY EYES AND RECONFIGURED ITSELF AROUND A STARTLING NEW REALIZATION.



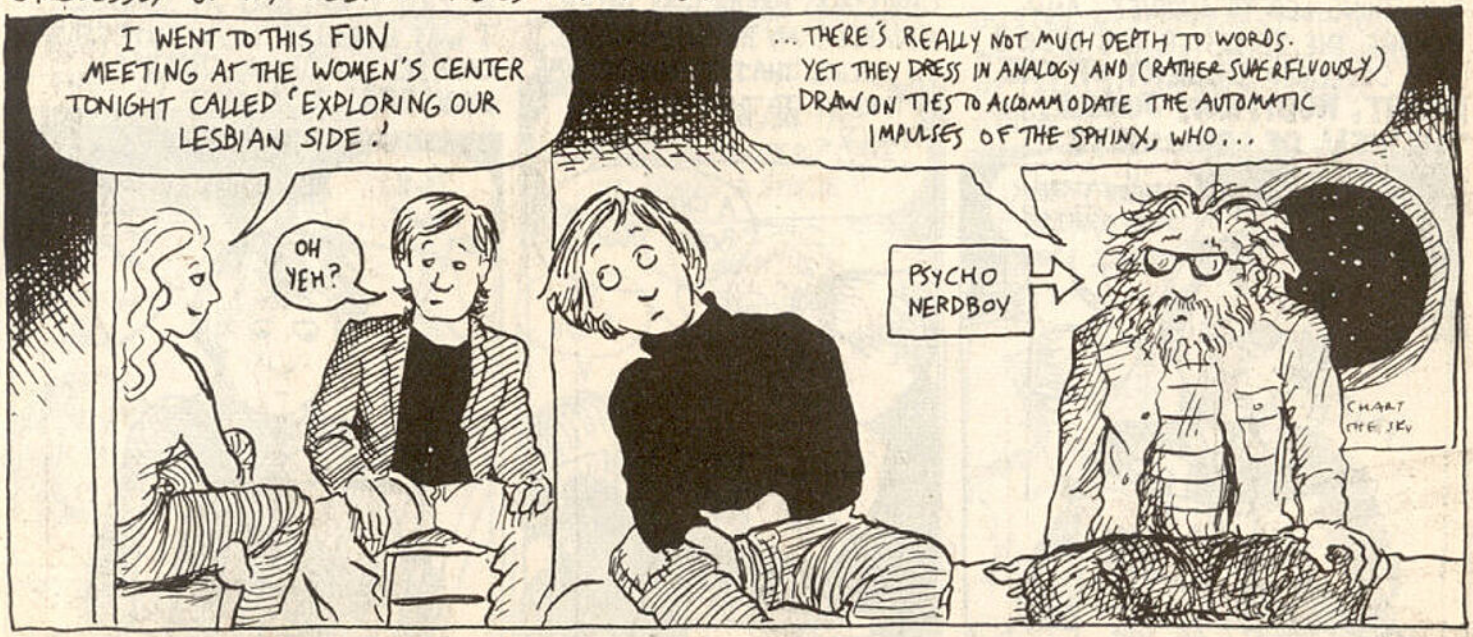


I DIDN'T KNOW ANY LESBIANS. I BARELY KNEW ANY **WOMEN.** MY LIMITED SOCIAL INTERACTION ALL SEEMED TO BE WITH **STRAIGHT BOYS.**

IN A CRUEL TWIST OF FATE, I FOUND MYSELF FENDING OFF **NERDBOYS** WHILE MY WILDLY POPULAR AND HIP HETEROSEXUAL ROOMMATE HAD DISCOVERED **REAL LIVE LESBIANS!**



SHE SEEMED TO HAVE ACCESS TO A WORLD I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW EXISTED... AND SHE SPOKE SO CARELESSLY OF MY DEEPEST HOPES AND FEARS!

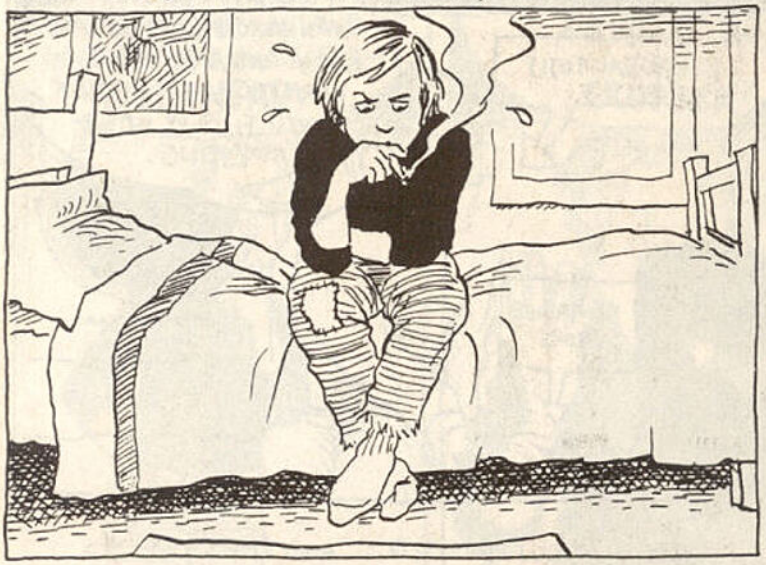


DESPAIR BECKONED... WHAT WAS "PRO-CHOICE?" IT SOUNDED LIKE SOME **FRINGE** POLITICAL GROUP! AND MEETINGS AT THE **WOMEN'S CENTER?** THIS STUFF WAS WAY OUT OF MY LEAGUE!

BUT I PERSEVERED, IN MY OWN QUIET WAY. THE BOOKSTORE YIELDED ANOTHER HELPFUL VOLUME.

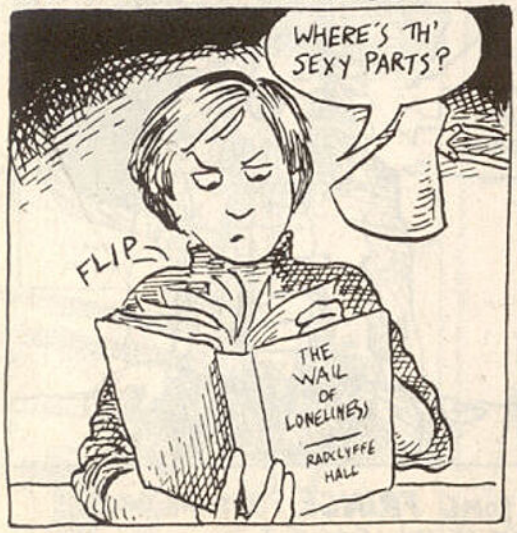
TOO NERVOUS TO READ SOMETHING SO BLATANT IN PUBLIC, I **BOUGHT** IT.

I READ THE WHOLE BOOK VORACIOUSLY. IT WAS VERY ENCOURAGING. WHEN I WAS DONE, I TORE THE COVER OFF, STUFFED THE REST OF IT IN A BROWN PAPER BAG, AND HID IT UNDER MY MATTRESS.



NEXT, I TOOK TO READING THE LESBIAN CHAPTER OF MY ROOMMATE'S **HITE REPORT** WHILE SHE WAS OUT.

ONE THING LED TO ANOTHER, AND BEFORE THE SEMESTER WAS OVER I HAD DEVOURED **DESERT OF THE HEART, RUBYFRUIT JUNGLE,** AND **THE WELL OF LONELINESS.**



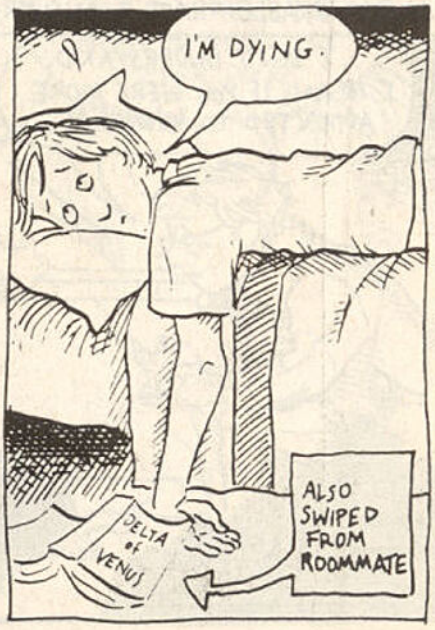
CHRISTMAS BREAK WAS INTERMINABLE. MY PARENTS FAILED TO NOTICE THAT I HAD BECOME A THREAT TO THE NUCLEAR FAMILY.

AT LAST I WAS BACK AT SCHOOL. I WAS ENROLLED IN AN INTENSIVE COURSE ON JAMES JOYCE'S **ULYSSES.** I SKIMMED IT...

... MY FULL ACADEMIC PASSION WAS RESERVED FOR A **DIFFERENT** ODYSSEY... THE QUEST FOR MY **PEOPLE.**

AFTER ALL, I STILL HADN'T MET ANY LESBIANS. AND IF I **DID**, WOULD THEY FIND ME AS ATTRACTIVE AS THE **NERDBOYS** SEEMED TO?

I WAS DYING TO HAVE SEX WITH A WOMAN. DYING.



I PRAYED FOR A KINDLY, EXPERIENCED LESBIAN TO COME RESCUE ME FROM MY LONELY AGONIES.

BUT ALL I GOT WAS ANOTHER BOY.

THIS ONE WAS DIFFERENT, THOUGH. WE REALLY HIT IT OFF AND ENDED UP TALKING ALL NIGHT IN HIS ROOM.

INSTEAD OF FEELING REPULSED WHEN HE MADE HIS MOVE AT 4 A.M., I JUST FELT SAD.

I RETURNED, NUN-LIKE, TO MY CELL.

HE SHOWED UP AT MY DOOR THE NEXT DAY AT NOON.

WE HAD A LONG, HALTING DISCUSSION ABOUT WHY I'D LEFT HIS ROOM SO ABRUPTLY. FINALLY, HE SAID SOMETHING SO REMARKABLE THAT I ANSWERED WITHOUT THINKING.

INTOXICATED WITH RELIEF, I POURED MY HEART AND SOUL OUT TO THAT UNFORTUNATE YOUNG MAN. HE WAS QUITE DECENT ABOUT IT.

BUT AFTERWARDS, I PANICKED.

I REALIZED I WAS GOING TO HAVE TO TAKE A MORE ACTIVE ROLE IN MY QUEST. I STARTED LOOKING AT WOMEN.

I LEARNED THAT THERE WAS A GAY ORGANIZATION ON CAMPUS!

I KNEW I HAD TO GO. I SPENT ALL TUESDAY AFTERNOON PSYCHING MYSELF UP.

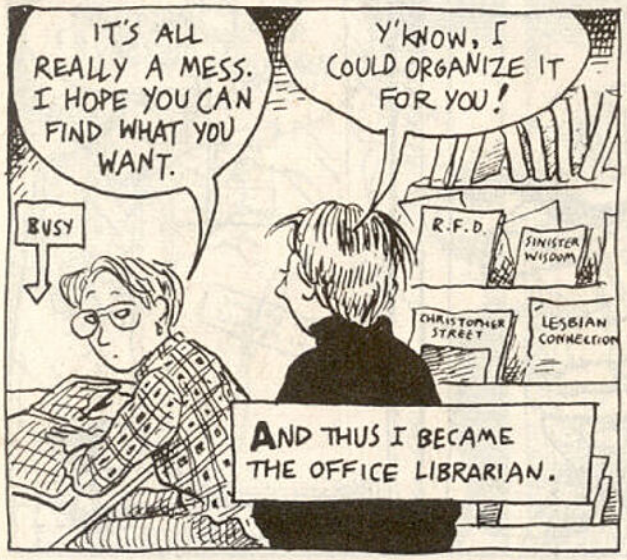
AS I ENTERED THE STUDENT UNION BUILDING THAT NIGHT. I FELT SURE EVERYONE KNEW WHERE I WAS HEADED.

I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT THE GROUP TALKED ABOUT. I SAT IN A CORNER, OVERWHELMED WITH THE SYMBOLIC WEIGHT OF SIMPLY BEING THERE, AMONG OTHERS. MY PEOPLE! I HAD FOUND THEM!

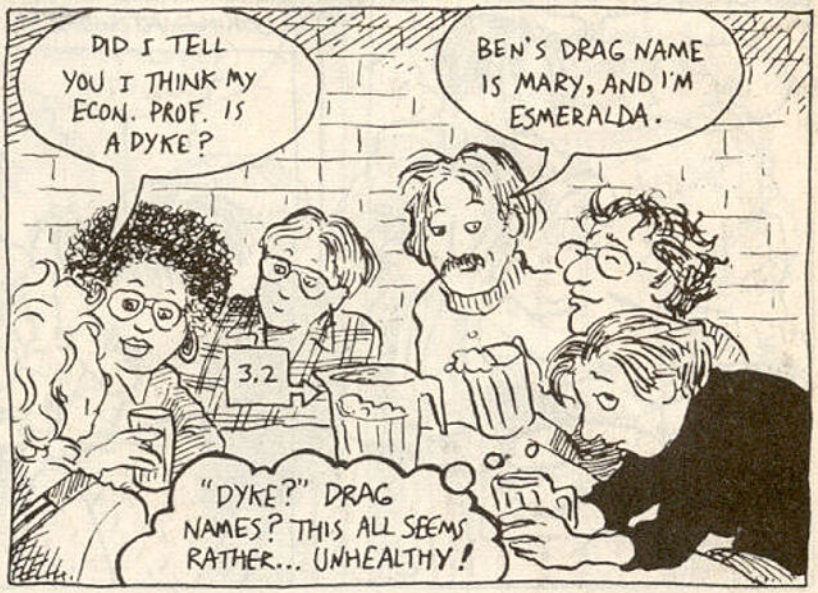
BUT **NOW** WHAT?

I COULDN'T TAKE ANY MORE STIMULATION. I NEEDED TO BE ALONE. AS I LEFT THE BUILDING, I HOPED EVERYONE COULD TELL WHERE I'D BEEN.

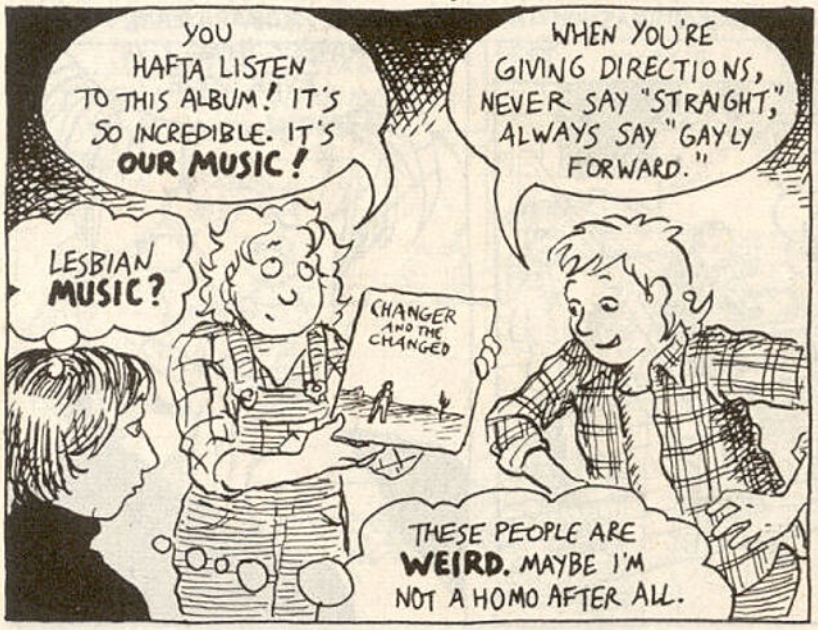
I WENT BACK TO THE GAY UNION DURING OFFICE HOURS. THEY HAD A TREASURE TROVE OF MAGAZINES AND BOOKS I HADN'T SEEN BEFORE.



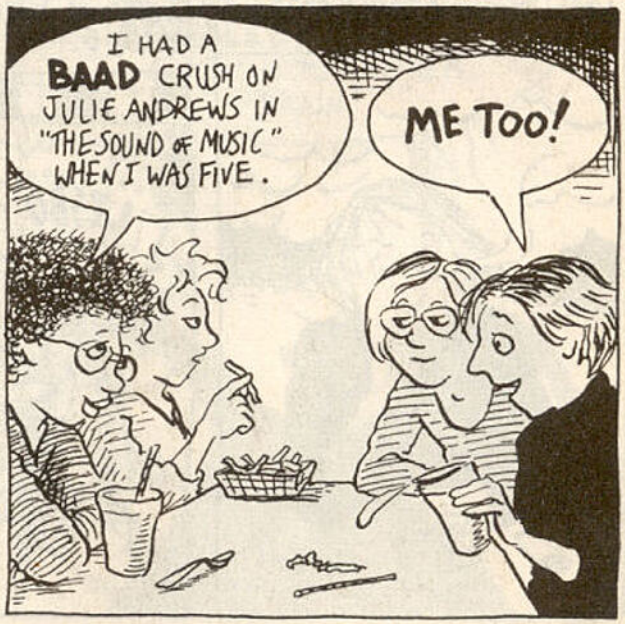
NEXT WEEK, I WENT OUT AFTER THE MEETING WITH THE "UNION" CROWD. I WAS A LITTLE NERVOUS ABOUT BEING SEEN IN PUBLIC WITH THEM.



THEY WERE EAGER TO INSTRUCT A NOVICE, BUT I COULDN'T REALLY RELATE TO THEM. I WAS PLAGUED WITH DOUBT.



I KEPT GOING TO MEETINGS, THOUGH, AND GRADUALLY WE HIT ON SOME COMMON BONDS.



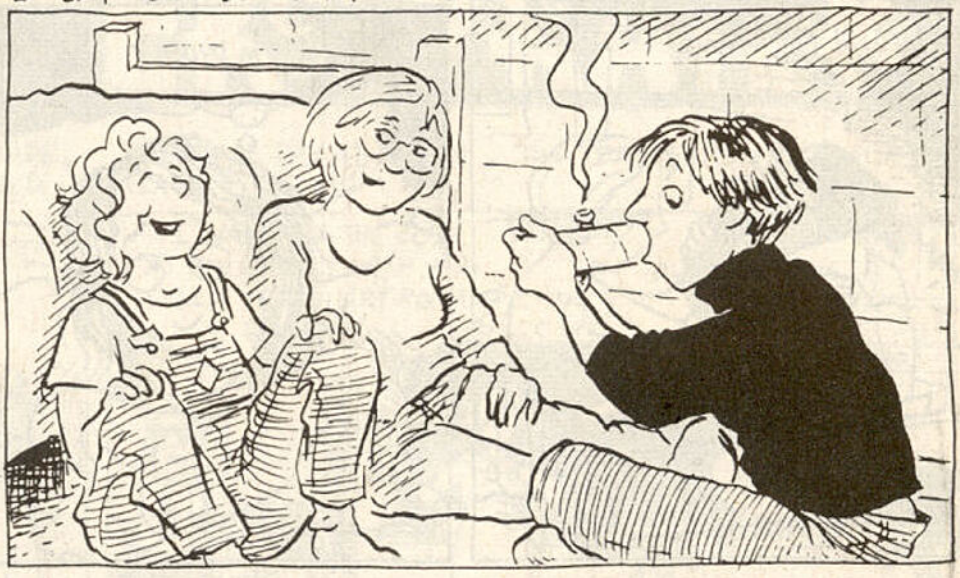
SLOWLY, I GAINED CONFIDENCE. I CAME OUT TO MY ROOMMATE.

I DISCOVERED THE EXHILARATION OF SPEAKING OUT AGAINST PREJUDICE.

I DISCOVERED ALCOHOL.

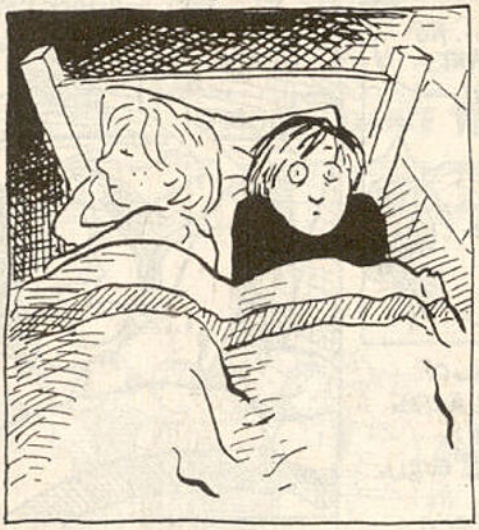
BUT I STILL HADN'T DISCOVERED **SEX**. THAT FINAL FRONTIER LOOMED AHEAD, TAUNTING ME, MOCKING MY PRIM, CEREBRAL PROGRESS THUS FAR.

FINALLY, AFTER A NIGHT OF DRUNKEN REVELRY, I BROUGHT TWO OF MY NEW FRIENDS BACK TO MY ROOM TO GET HIGH. I REMEMBER THE PIPE I RIGGED UP OUT OF AN EMPTY TOILET PAPER TUBE, BUT I DON'T REMEMBER WHAT WE TALKED ABOUT.



I DON'T REMEMBER BECKY LEAVING, BUT I DO REMEMBER THAT JOAN STAYED.

I TURNED OFF THE LIGHT. WE REMOVED OUR JEANS AND GOT INTO MY SINGLE BED. STILL IN MY BRA AND WOOL SWEATER, I WAS PROFOUNDLY UNCOMFORTABLE.



AS WE LAY THERE, I BEGAN TO **SHIVER** UNCONTROLLABLY.

THE WHOLE BED BEGAN TO SHAKE, BANGING AGAINST THE WALL.

JOAN TRIED TO SOOTHE ME, BUT WHEREVER SHE TOUCHED ME, I WAS UNBEARABLY **TICKLISH**.

EVENTUALLY, I RELAXED A BIT AND WE KISSED.

SHE SEEMED TO KNOW WHAT SHE WAS DOING, AND GOT US BOTH UNDRESSED.

UNH.

SNAP!

TO BE PERFECTLY HONEST, I REMEMBER VERY LITTLE OF WHAT FOLLOWED, EXCEPT THAT SHE WENT DOWN ON ME...

I'M DYING!

...AND THAT I HAD ABSOLUTELY NO IDEA HOW TO TOUCH HER.

JEEZ, WHAT'S THIS RUBBERY PART?

SHE SLEPT, BUT I LAY AWAKE ALL NIGHT, PINNED BETWEEN HER AND THE WALL. AT 9 O' CLOCK, SHE GOT UP AND LEFT AFTER A BRIEF CHAT.

SO, D'YOU WANNA COME TO BRUNCH?

UM... NO THANKS

UNFAMILIAR WITH THE PROTOCOL OF SUCH SITUATIONS, I DIDN'T REALIZE HOW CHURLISH MY REFUSAL WAS. (IN SPITE OF THIS, JOAN AND I EVENTUALLY BECAME LOVERS.)

THAT MORNING I WANTED TO BE ALONE TO SAVOR MY EXQUISITELY JARRING SENSATIONS. I FELT DEBAUCHED AND EXULTANT, MELANCHOLY AND HOPEFUL.

GUESS I'M REALLY A LESBIAN NOW.

I WISH I HAD A MORE ROMANTIC, LESS DRUG-INDUCED **FIRST TIME** FOR YOU.

BUT I'VE TOLD THE TRUE STORY.

MY OWN HUMBLE CONTRIBUTION TO THAT EPIC TALE OF COLLECTIVE SELF-REVELATION THAT MY SISTERS AND BROTHERS HAVE BEEN TELLING FOR GENERATIONS.

IT'S AN HONOR, IT REALLY IS.

THANKS FOR DROPPING BY.

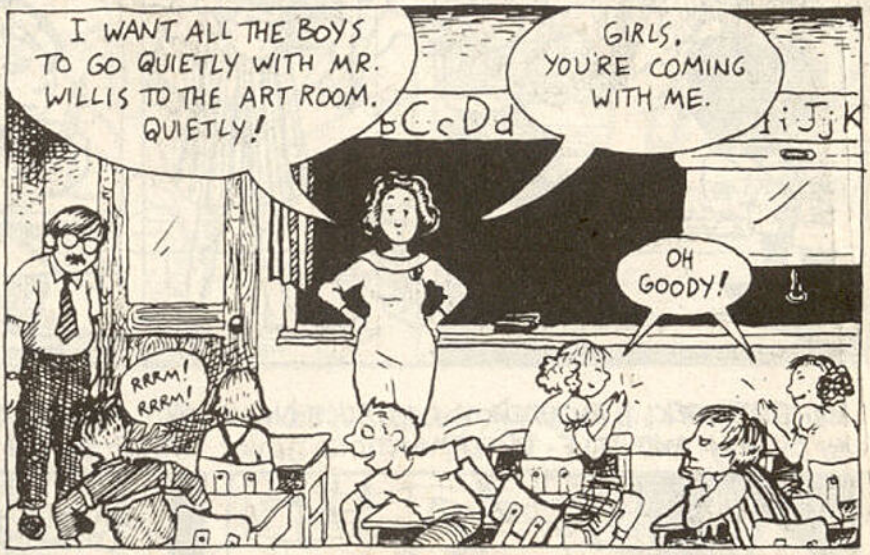
COME OUT AGAIN.

CIAO.

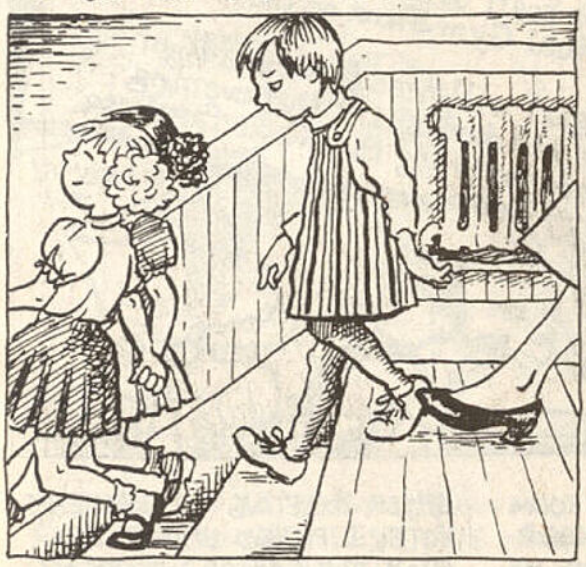
the POWER of PRAYER

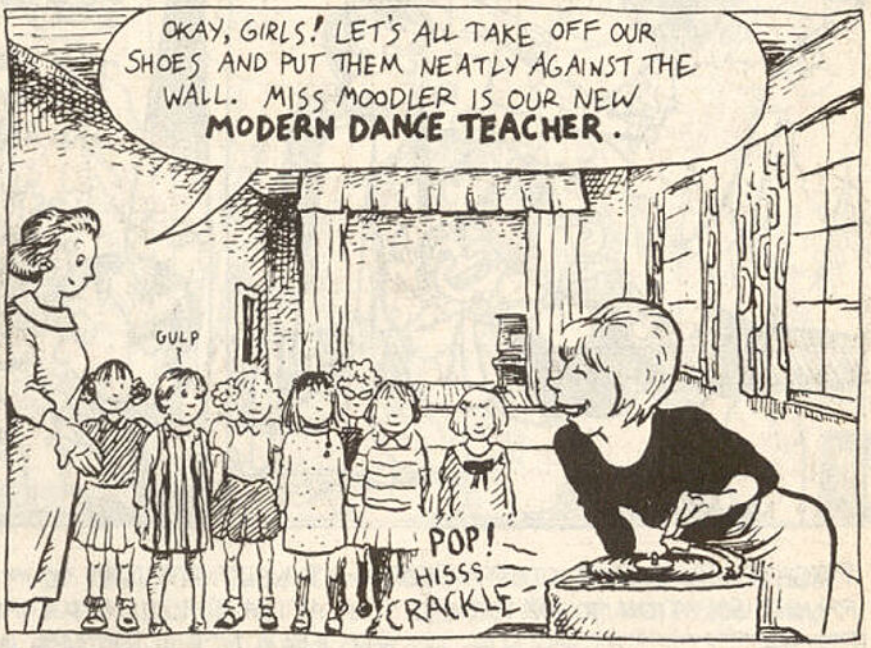
UNTIL THE SPRING OF SECOND GRADE, I WAS A CAREFREE, GODLESS CHILD. THE WORLD WAS MY OYSTER.

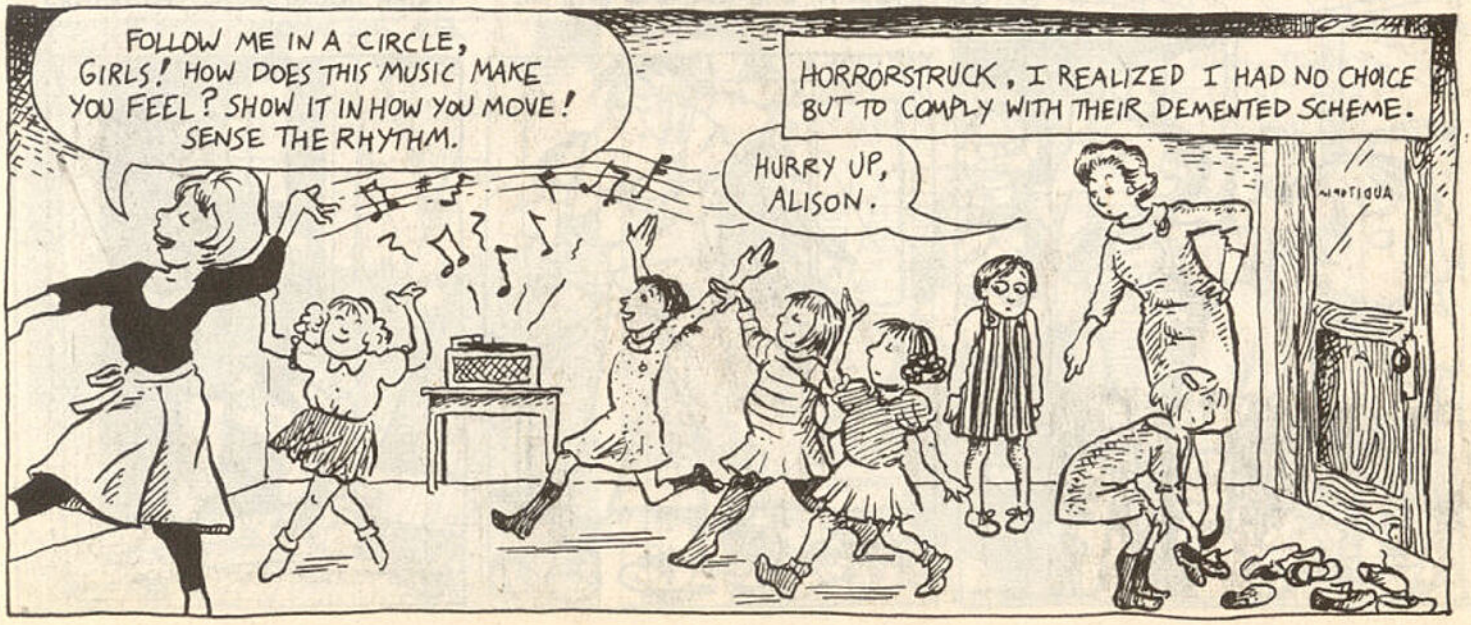
THEN ONE DAY AT SCHOOL, THE TEACHER DIVIDED OUR CLASS BY SEX.



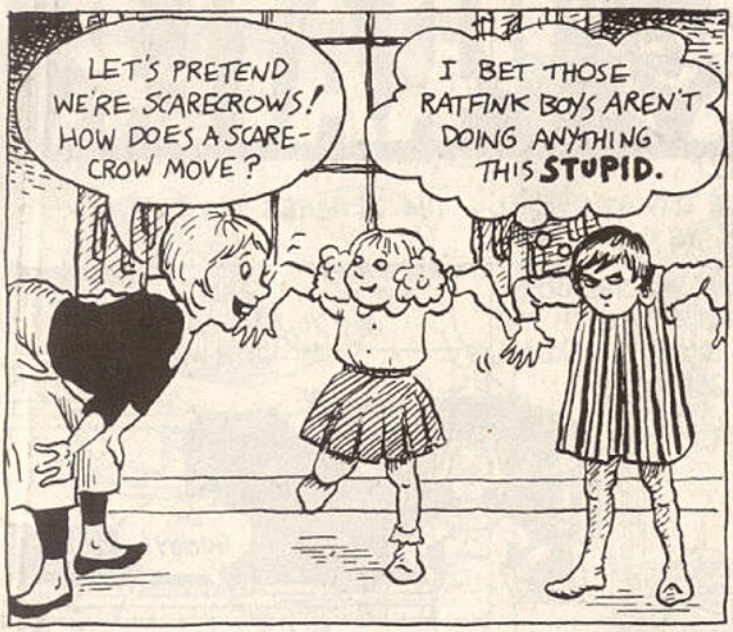
NOT EVEN MY WORST SUSPICIONS PREPARED ME FOR WHAT WAS TO FOLLOW.



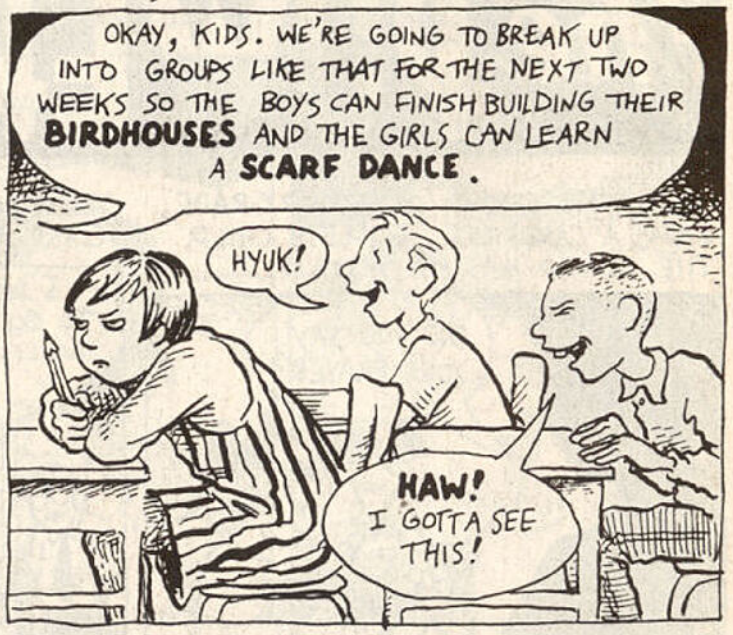




I WENT THROUGH THE MOTIONS IN ORDER TO AVOID BEING SINGLED OUT FOR SOME EVEN **WORSE** FATE.

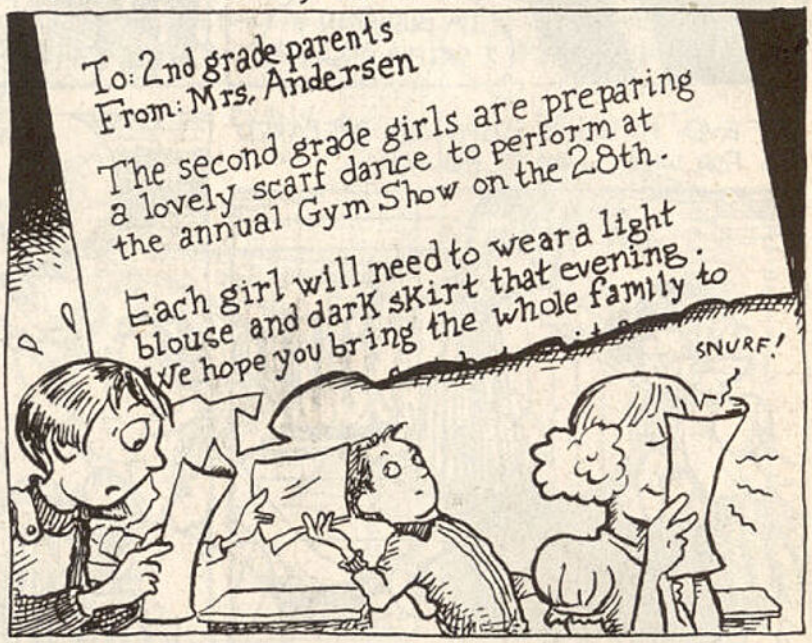


BACK IN THE CLASSROOM, I THOUGHT MY HUMILIATION WAS OVER... BUT I WAS WRONG.



ALL THAT WEEK, I ENDURED THIS ASSAULT ON MY DIGNITY AND SELF-DETERMINATION.

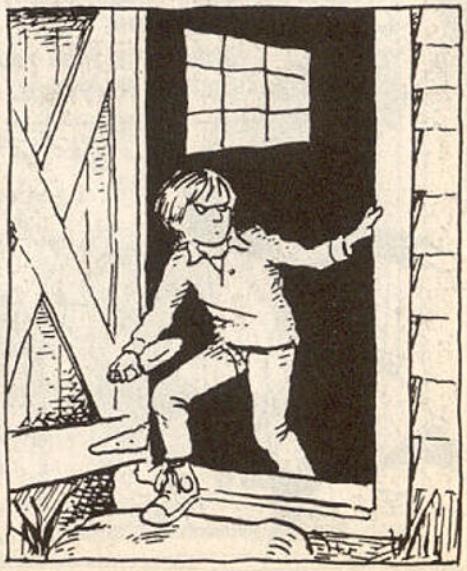
BUT FINALLY THEY WENT TOO FAR. ONE DAY WE WERE WERE GIVEN NOTES TO TAKE HOME.



FRIGHTENED, I CONCOCTED A SHORT-RANGE SOLUTION TO MY PLIGHT.

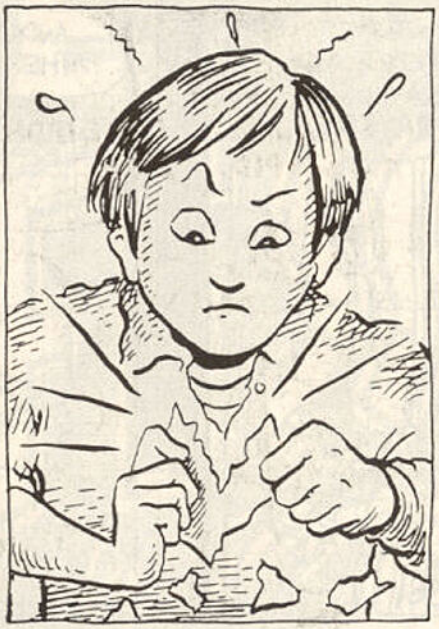
I WENT STRAIGHT TO MY ROOM AFTER SCHOOL AND CHANGED FROM MY GIRL COSTUME INTO MY REGULAR CLOTHES.

AFTER POCKETING THE TEACHER'S NOTE, I PICKED UP A TROWEL FROM THE GARAGE AND SET OFF FOR THE WOODS.



AT THE ABANDONED RAILROAD TRACKS, I STOPPED AND DUG A DEEP HOLE...

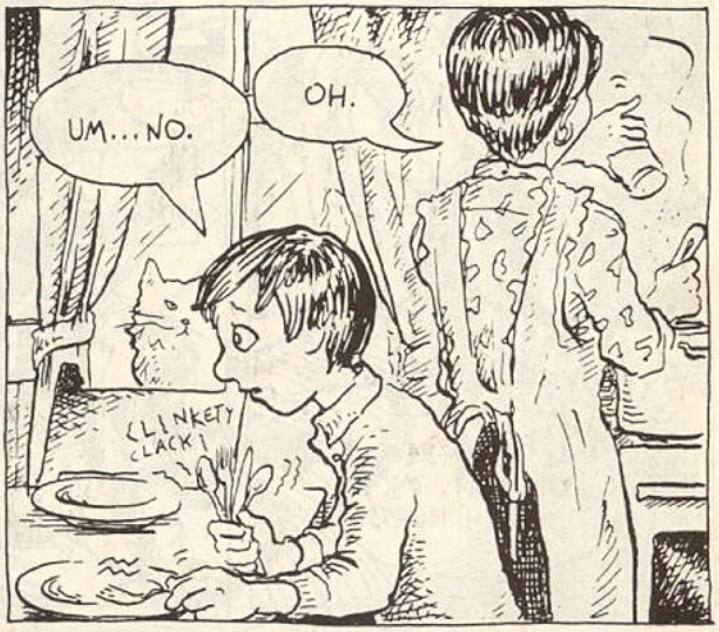
TORE THE NOTE INTO AS MANY PIECES AS I POSSIBLY COULD...



... AND BURIED THEM.

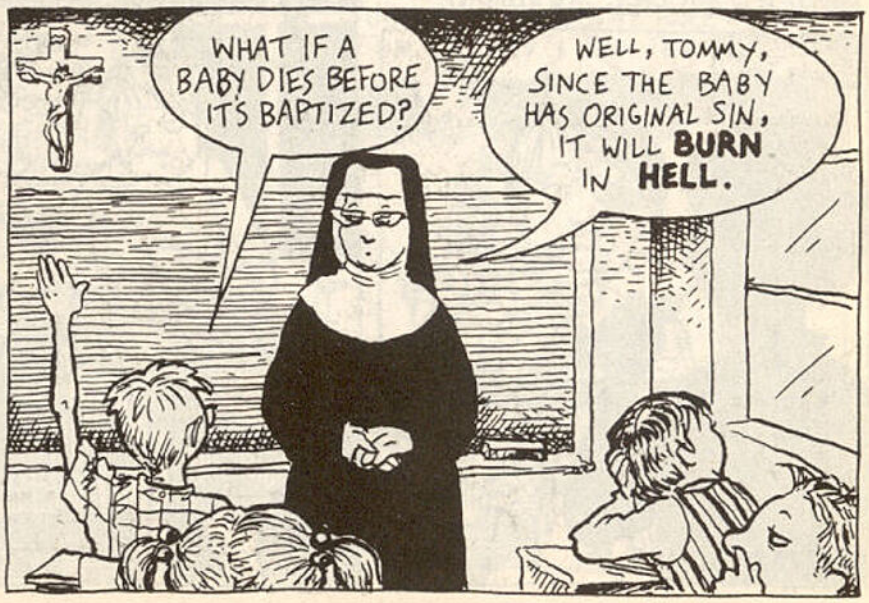
THE NEXT DAY, HOWEVER, I HAD A BAD SCARE.

I PLAYED IT COOL, AND SHE DIDN'T SUSPECT A THING.



BUT THE DAY OF THE GYM SHOW WAS FAST ENCROACHING. DESPERATE NOW, I HOPED FOR A MIRACLE.

ON SATURDAY, I ATTENDED MY REGULAR WEEKLY CHURCH SCHOOL CLASS. I HAD NEVER PAID MUCH ATTENTION BEFORE. IT ALL SEEMED SO ABSTRACT.



BUT THAT MORNING, CATHOLIC DOCTRINE FELL INTO PLACE FOR ME.

THE NIGHT BEFORE THE GYM SHOW, I SAT UP IN BED SAYING A HUNDRED "OUR FATHERS."

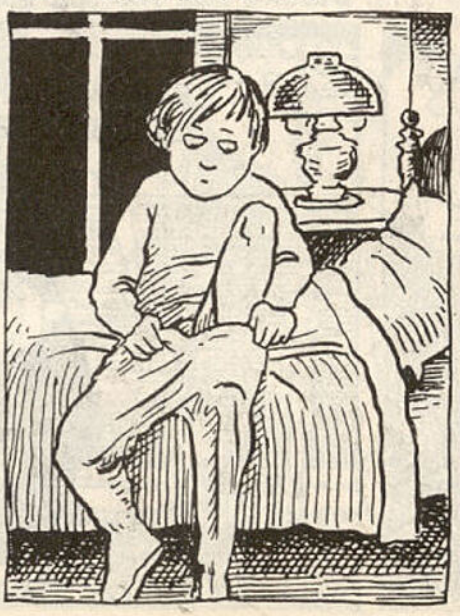
AND I AWOKE THE NEXT DAY WITH DIVINE INSPIRATION.

MIRACULOUSLY, IT WORKED.

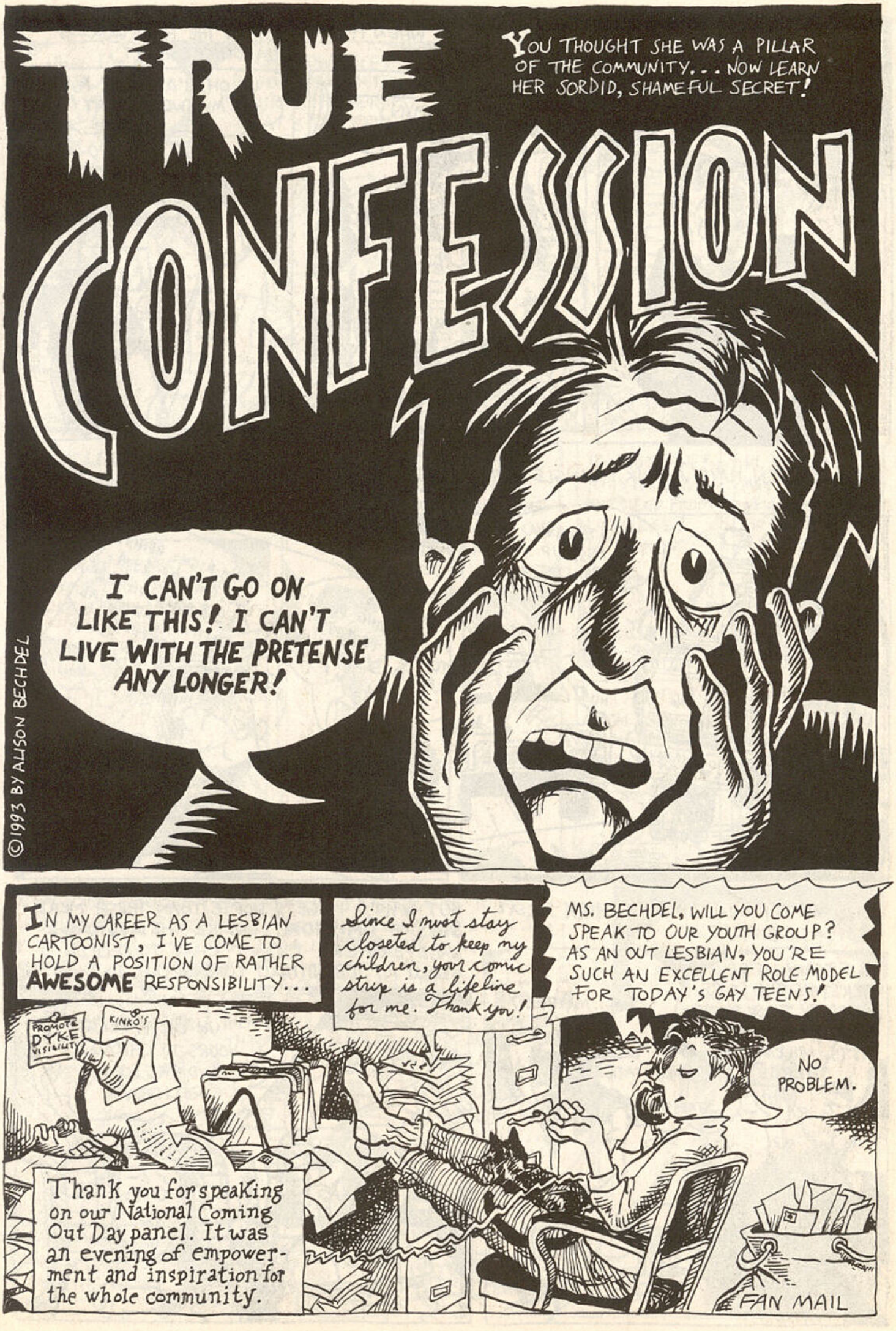
AND EVEN MORE MIRACULOUSLY, WHEN MY MOTHER RETURNED FROM TAKING MY BROTHERS TO THE GYM SHOW THAT NIGHT, SHE DIDN'T MENTION MY CLASSMATES' LITTLE PERFORMANCE.

YES, I HAD BEEN DELIVERED FROM THE SCARF DANCE. BUT SOMEHOW I COULDN'T RECAPTURE MY FORMER CAREFREE ABANDON.

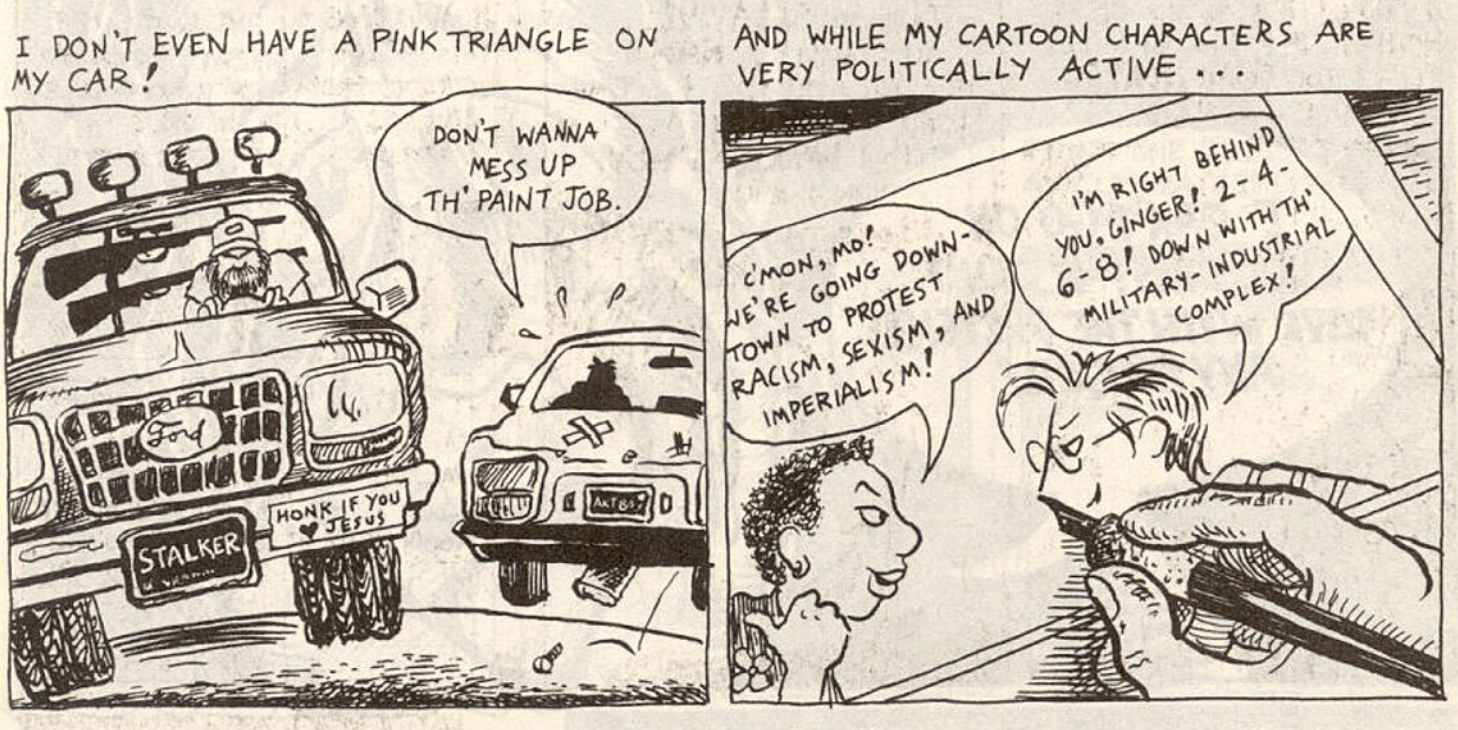
AFTER ALL, GOD ONLY KNEW WHAT FURTHER EVILS THIS LIFE HELD IN STORE.

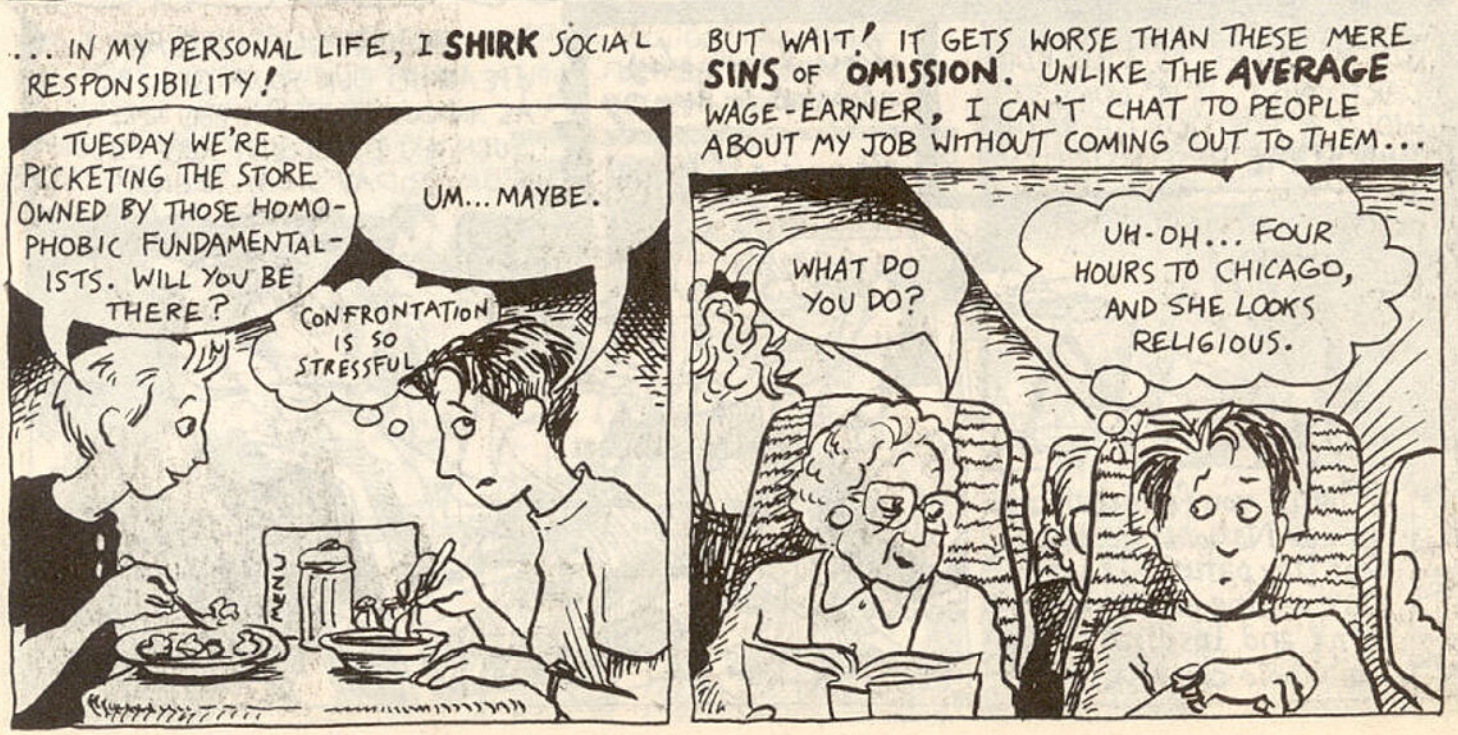


JUST TO BE ON THE SAFE SIDE, I SAID ANOTHER HUNDRED PRAYERS BEFORE I LAY DOWN AND SLEPT.


TRUE CONFESSION
YOU THOUGHT SHE WAS A PILLAR OF THE COMMUNITY... NOW LEARN HER SORDID, SHAMEFUL SECRET!
I CAN'T GO ON LIKE THIS! I CAN'T LIVE WITH THE PRETENSE ANY LONGER!
©1993 BY ALISON BECHDEL
IN MY CAREER AS A LESBIAN CARTOONIST, I'VE COME TO HOLD A POSITION OF RATHER AWESOME RESPONSIBILITY...
Since I must stay closeted to keep my children, your comic strip is a lifeline for me. Thank you!
MS. BECHDEL, WILL YOU COME SPEAK TO OUR YOUTH GROUP? AS AN OUT LESBIAN, YOU'RE SUCH AN EXCELLENT ROLE MODEL FOR TODAY'S GAY TEENS!
PROMOTE DYKE VISIBILITY
KINKO'S
NO PROBLEM.
Thank you for speaking on our National Coming Out Day panel. It was an evening of empowerment and inspiration for the whole community.
FAN MAIL

BUT IT'S ALL A SHAM! I'M A FRAUD, A FAKE, A PHONY!! A CLOSET CLOSET CASE!!
SURE, I'M OUT WHEN IT'S CONVENIENT...
IDAHO WOMYN'S MUSIC FESTIVAL
Scream Box
BUT IN THE REAL WORLD, I'M CHICKENSHIT.
UH OH! I'D BETTER PUT ON MY SWEATSHIRT!
MALL-O-RAMA
PEOPLE LIKE US
BOOKS
DYKE
FAG
QUEER


I DON'T EVEN HAVE A PINK TRIANGLE ON MY CAR!
DON'T WANNA MESS UP TH' PAINT JOB.
Ford
STALKER
HONK IF YOU ♥ JESUS
AND WHILE MY CARTOON CHARACTERS ARE VERY POLITICALLY ACTIVE...
C'MON, MO! WE'RE GOING DOWN-TOWN TO PROTEST RACISM, SEXISM, AND IMPERIALISM!
I'M RIGHT BEHIND YOU, GINGER! 2-4-6-8! DOWN WITH TH' MILITARY-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX!


...IN MY PERSONAL LIFE, I SHIRK SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY!
TUESDAY WE'RE PICKETING THE STORE OWNED BY THOSE HOMO-PHOBIC FUNDAMENTAL-ISTS. WILL YOU BE THERE?
UM... MAYBE.
CONFRONTATION IS SO STRESSFUL
MENU
BUT WAIT! IT GETS WORSE THAN THESE MERE SINS OF OMISSION. UNLIKE THE AVERAGE WAGE-EARNER, I CAN'T CHAT TO PEOPLE ABOUT MY JOB WITHOUT COMING OUT TO THEM...
WHAT DO YOU DO?
UH-OH... FOUR HOURS TO CHICAGO, AND SHE LOOKS RELIGIOUS.

SO I LIE!
UH... I'M A FREELANCE ILLUSTRATOR. YEAH.
OH, HOW NICE. DO YOU EVER WATCH "HOUR OF POWER?" THAT'S THE CHURCH I BELONG TO.
I'M A REAL TRAITOR TO MY PEOPLE.
... AND GENERAL SCHWARZKOPF JUST CAME AND SPOKE TO US. WHAT A WONDERFUL MAN!
THAT MUST HAVE BEEN VERY EXCITING.
IT DOESN'T TAKE A HERO
SHE HAD A SIGNED COPY
I DON'T LIKE BEING DISHONEST. BUT THE TRUTH JUST SEEMS TOO COMPLICATED FOR SOME PEOPLE...
ENJOY THE REST OF YOUR TRIP. YOU SEEM LIKE A VERY NICE YOUNG MAN.
TAKE MY RELATIVES, FOR EXAMPLE! HAH! BET YOU ASSUMED A BIG-TIME LESBO LIKE ME WOULD BE OUT TO HER WHOLE FAMILY, DIDN'T YOU?
HI, AUNT JANE! THIS IS JUDY, MY FRIEND FROM COLLEGE!
1981
HI, AUNT JANE! MEET SYLVIA, MY NEW ROOMMATE IN THE CITY!
1983
AUNT JANE! THIS IS MY PAL LOUISE, WHO I'M MOVING ACROSS THE COUNTRY TO ROOM WITH!
1985
HI, AUNT JANE! MEET LILLIAN. SHE NEEDED A HOUSEMATE SO I MOVED BACK EAST TO HELP HER OUT!
1990
AUNT JANE FIGURED IT OUT EVENTUALLY, NO THANKS TO ME... AND NOW SHE'S SUPPORTIVE, TOO, IN HER WAY. BUT EVEN SO, I CAN'T BRING MYSELF TO ACTUALLY COME OUT TO HER...
WHERE'S THAT NICE LILLIAN YOU BROUGHT HOME LAST CHRISTMAS?
... IF I ACKNOWLEDGE THAT LILLIAN WAS MY LOVER BY TELLING AUNT JANE WE BROKE UP THEN SHE'LL FORM THE ERRONEOUS IMPRESSION THAT LESBIAN RELATIONSHIPS ARE UNSTABLE. WOULDN'T WANT THAT TO HAPPEN!
UM... SHE GOT A NEW JOB IN, UH... THE YUKON.
BAKING MY HOMOPHOBIC UNCLE'S FAVORITE COOKIES
YES, I'M A DESPICABLE HYPOCRITE. BUT I STILL HAVEN'T TOLD YOU THE WORST.

THIS LILLIAN I MENTIONED.. SHE WASN'T OUT TO HER FAMILY... SO WHEN THEY WERE COMING TO VISIT...
PAROXYSM OF SHAME
YOU WANT ME TO WHAT?!
LOOK, WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL? JUST TURN A FEW BOOKS AROUND ON THE SHELF, PUT AWAY ANY STUFF THAT'S OBVIOUSLY GAY!
READ MY LIPS
ANNUAL LESBIAN FEST
WELL, OKAY. IF YOU INSIST.
PRIDE DAY
OUT & PROUD FILM SERIES
GET USED TO IT
THE THINGS WE DO FOR LOVE
safe sex is hot sex
HOMO
DYKE
LEZ
QUEER
SAPPHIST
TRIBADE
BULLDAGGER
phrane
DIRE BRAND BOOKS
50 - COUNT 'EM - 50 COPIES "STILL MORE DYKES TO WATCH OUT FOR"
THERE. NOW THAT YOU KNOW THE TRUE EXTENT OF MY SELF-LOATHING AND INTERNALIZED HOMOPHOBIA, I FEEL MUCH BETTER!
I GUESS CONFESSION REALLY IS GOOD FOR THE SOUL.
DID I MENTION THE NIGHT IN APRIL, 1985 THAT I SPENT BOFFING BEATRICE TERWILLIGER WHILE MY LOVER THOUGHT I HAD AN EMERGENCY SESSION WITH MY THERAPIST? WELL,...

SERVANTS TO THE CAUSE

Alison Bechdel

SPARE CHANGE?

ADULT NOVELTIES

HIGH ABOVE THE BUSTLE OF A TRANSITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD IN A MODERATELY-SIZED NORTH AMERICAN METROPOLIS...

THE COLLECTIVE MEMBERS OF THE **TEN PERCENT TRIBUNE** ARE PUTTING THE LATEST ISSUE TO BED WITH THEIR USUAL FLAIR AND PROFESSIONALISM...

·615·

10% Tribune

OH MY GOD! THE MESSENGER'S COMING IN **FIFTEEN MINUTES** AND I CAN'T FIND THE HEADLINE FOR THE **FDA** ARTICLE! DID YOU THROW IT **AWAY?**

IN PRODUCTION

I DON'T **THINK** SO... JUST USE THE ONE FROM **LAST** ISSUE. HAVE YOU SEEN THE FULL-PAGE AD FOR THE BACK COVER ANYWHERE?

IT'S NOT HERE?! OH MY **GOD!** WE CAN'T RUN IT **BLANK!** JULIO SAID HE'D BRING IT IN THIS **MORNING!**

DID I HEAR MY NAME? LIZA, I ALWAYS KNEW YOU WERE **TRASHY**, BUT **REALLY!** HERE'S THE **976-LEWD** AD.

FINALLY! WHERE HAVE YOU **BEEN?**

PRODUCTION ROOM

©1988 BY ALISON BECHDEL

UH-OH... **NOW** WHAT?

I DON'T THINK WE CAN **PRINT** THIS AD! IT... IT DOESN'T **CONFORM** TO OUR **GUIDELINES**..

WHAT A SHAME... HE SURE CONFORMS TO **MINE**.

WE **HAVE** TO PRINT IT! **WE ONLY HAVE TEN MINUTES!** WHY DIDN'T I GO INTO A LESS STRESSFUL FIELD? **FUTURES TRADING**, MAYBE, OR **FIREFIGHTING**... **WHAT ARE WE GONNA DO?!**

WHEN IN DOUBT, HAVE A **COLLECTIVE MEETING!**

RACHEL! ARTHUR! MJ! COME QUICK!

WE **CAN'T** RUN IT! FULL-PAGE IMAGES OF **NAKED MEN** UPSET THE BALANCE OF **GAY** TO **LESBIAN** CONTENT! IT DEFEATS OUR WHOLE **PURPOSE!**

BUT WE CAN'T BE A PARTY TO **CENSORSHIP** EITHER, MJ!

AND THEN THERE'S THE FACT THAT IT'S ALREADY **PAID** FOR!

BUT THIS IS A **RESPECTABLE** PUBLICATION! WE HAVE TO DRAW THE LINE **SOMEWHERE!**

THAT'S IT! LIZA! DRAW A **FIG-LEAF** OR SOMETHING ON HIM!

JUST THEN, A **MENACING SPECTER** APPEARS AT THE DOOR...

GASP!

PACKAGE FOR PICK-UP?

QUICK! LIZA! DO SOMETHING!

FOUR YEARS OF ART SCHOOL AND I'M DRAWING **BIKINIS** ON **NAKED MEN** FOR A LIVING.

THUS A CRISIS IS **Aaverted**, THE COLLECTIVE PROCESS IS **UPHELD**, AND THE PRESSES KEEP **ROLLING**. IT'S ALL IN A DAY'S WORK FOR THESE LOYAL COMMUNITY **SERVANTS** IN THEIR **SELFLESS QUEST** FOR JOURNALISTIC **EXCELLENCE**.

...I'VE HEARD **AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS** MAKE GOOD MONEY...

SPARE CHANGE?

ADULT NOVELTIES

SERVANTS TO THE CAUSE
Alison Bechdel
RINNG
THE TELEPHONE... HARMLESS MODERN CONVENIENCE, OR TECHNOLOGICAL TOOL OF TORTURE? THE NEWSROOM IS HOPPING AS WE LOOK IN ON OUR COURAGEOUS COLLECTIVE...
WHAT DO YOU SAY THIS TIME, GANG? ANY BETS? CRANK, CREDITOR, OR CRYBABY?
RINNG!
CRANK.
YEAH, IT'S ABOUT TIME FOR A CRANK CALL!
HELLO, TRIBUNE! CAN I HELP YOU?
THIS IS THE PUBLIC LIBRARY. WE'VE BEEN RECEIVING COMPLAINTS THAT YOUR PUBLICATION IS PORNOGRAPHIC AND WE'D LIKE TO CANCEL OUR SUBSCRIPTION IMMEDIATELY! THANK YOU! -CLIK!-
WELL THANK YOU, YOU REPRESSIVE, HOMOPHOBIC FASCIST!
CRANK! WE WERE RIGHT!
NOPE! THAT WAS A GENUINE OBSCENE PHONE CALL. FROM THE PUBLIC LIBRARY! WHAT IS THIS WORLD COMING TO?
RINNG
LET IT RING! WE'VE ANSWERED ENOUGH CALLS FOR ONE DAY!
WHAT IF IT'S AN ADVERTISER, ERIC?! HELLO, TRIBUNE!
REPENT, SODOMITE, OR DROWN IN THE LAKE OF FIRE! -CLIK!-
DOESN'T SOUND LIKE AN ADVERTISER...
CRANK!
YOUR TURN, LIZA!
CAN'T WE LET THE MACHINE GET IT?
RIINNG!
THE MACHINE? LIZA! WHAT IF IT'S A BROTHER OR SISTER IN TROUBLE? SOME POOR SOUL STRUGGLING TO COME OUT?! THEY'VE FINALLY SUMMONED THE COURAGE TO DIAL THIS NUMBER... TO REACH OUT FOR GUIDANCE FROM THE COMMUNITY...
RING!
...AND YOU'D LET A MACHINE ANSWER THEM?! ALL THE CRANK CALLS ARE WORTH IT IF WE CAN BE HERE FOR JUST ONE PERSON IN NEED! ISN'T THAT WHAT THIS PAPER IS ABOUT, AFTER ALL?!
RING!
©1989 BY ALISON BECHDEL
ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT! STOP THE VIOLINS! HELLO, TEN PERCENT TRIBUNE, YOUR COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER!
WELL FINALLY! A REAL PERSON AND NOT A MACHINE! LISTEN, THIS IS THE SECRETARY OF THE GAY AND LESBIAN CRIBBAGE LEAGUE... MY NAME WAS MISSPELLED TWICE IN YOUR LAST ISSUE! HAVEN'T YOU PEOPLE EVER HEARD OF PROOFREADING? BLAH BLAH BLAH...
YO, M.J.! IT'S A CRYBABY... ER, I MEAN, A POOR SOUL IN NEED, FOR YOU.

SERVANTS TO THE CAUSE
Alison Bechdel
AS IF THE SATISFACTION OF HONEST WORK WELL DONE WERE NOT ENOUGH...
PAYDAY!
ARTHUR! MY CHECK IS $50 SHORT!
MINE TOO! WHAT'S GOING ON, ARTHUR? I NEED THAT MONEY!
I KNOW, I KNOW! I'M SORRY! WE'RE REALLY STRAPPED RIGHT NOW. WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO MAKE IT UP TO EVERYONE NEXT WEEK.
©1989 BY ALISON BECHDEL
WHY, ERIC?! WHY DO WE STAY HERE WORKING FOR SUBSISTENCE WAGES WHEN WE COULD BE MAKING FOUR TIMES AS MUCH AT SOME BIG, POLITICALLY INCORRECT CORPORATION DOWNTOWN!?
FOR THE CAUSE, LIZA, THE CAUSE, REMEMBER? AND BESIDES, THEY'D NEVER LET US DRESS LIKE THIS DOWNTOWN.
OH, RIGHT. I JUST FORGOT FOR A MINUTE, THAT'S ALL.
Y'KNOW, YOU SHOULD CONSIDER YOURSELVES LUCKY! HOW MANY GAY PAPERS PAY THEIR STAFF ANYTHING? UNTIL A COUPLE YEARS AGO, I VOLUNTEERED MY TIME HERE AFTER WORKING ALL WEEK AT A STRAIGHT JOB. IT WAS A LABOR OF LOVE!
JEEZ, ARTHUR! HOW PETTY I'VE BEEN! EXPECTING A PAYCHECK IN EXCHANGE FOR WORK! Y'KNOW, FROM NOW ON, I'LL DO MY JOB FOR NOTHING!
SURE, JOKE ABOUT IT! BUT AFTER ALL THE YEARS I SPENT IN THE CLOSET AT MY JOB DOWNTOWN, I'M HAPPY TO WORK HERE FOR SOMETHING I CARE ABOUT! YOUR PROBLEM IS, YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT BEING IN THE CLOSET IS LIKE!
ARTHUR! WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?! ISN'T THAT EXACTLY WHAT WE'VE STRUGGLED FOR ALL THESE YEARS?! I THINK IT'S REFRESHING TO HEAR THEM COMPLAIN ABOUT THEIR PAYCHECKS!
YEAH, ARTHUR! YOU SHOULD BE PROUD! THINK OF EACH WHINE AS A TRIBUTE TO YOUR PIONEERING EFFORTS!
GEE, MAYBE AFTER I PAY THE RENT ON MY DAMP, WINDOWLESS, ONE-ROOM APARTMENT I'LL BE ABLE TO AFFORD A NEW ROACH MOTEL!
AND AFTER I MAKE MY STUDENT LOAN PAYMENT, I MIGHT HAVE CHANGE LEFT OVER FOR THE HOMELESS PEOPLE DOWN ON THE STREET.
I SUPPOSE IT'S ILLEGAL TO REQUIRE THAT COLLECTIVE MEMBERS BE AT LEAST FORTY YEARS OLD?
MOST LIKELY. NOT A HALF-BAD IDEA, THOUGH.

SERVANTS TO THE CAUSE
by Alison Bechdel
IT'S LUNCH HOUR AT THE TEN PERCENT TRIBUNE...
WHY DO YOU BUY THOSE SILLY FASHION MAGAZINES?
VOGUE
IT'S AN ADDICTION! I STARTED ON MY MOM'S BEFORE I COULD READ. BESIDES, IT'S FASCINATING STUFF! LOOK IT THIS! "ETERNITY." THE PERFUME OF THE 90'S. I GUESS PROMISCUITY IS NOW AN OFFICIAL FASHION. "DON'T."
©1989 BY ALISON BECHDEL
TELL ME ABOUT IT, DAHLING! ANYONE WHO'S ANYONE IS DEEPLY INTO COMMITMENT THIS SEASON! HAVE YOU BEEN FOLLOWING THE PERSONALS?
YEAH... IN FACT, I'VE BEEN THINKING OF RUNNING ONE. YOU SHOULD TOO, LIZA! WE'LL DO IT TOGETHER!
AW, ERIC... I DUNNO. IT SEEMS SO. DESPERATE, SOMEHOW.
FACE IT, LIZA. WE'RE ALL DESPERATE. C'MON, IT'LL BE FUN! WE'LL WRITE YOU UP A GREAT AD!
WE?
SURE, I'M AN EXPERT! HOW'S THIS? "PLUMP, TEMPESTUOUS, ENVIRONMENTALLY AWARE L, SEEKS SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE PLAYMATE FOR PASSIONATE EXCHANGE OF IDEAS AND BODILY FLUIDS."
THAT'S BEAUTIFUL, ERIC. PURE POETRY. NOW HERE'S ONE FOR YOU. "SCRAWNY, LONGHAIRED, ADULT CHILD OF WHITE ANGLO-SAXON PROTESTANTS, INTO SOY MILK AND CRYSTALS, SEEKS SPACED-OUT SPIRITUAL TYPE FOR TRANSCENDENTAL TITILLATION, MAYBE MORE."
SLURP!
HMM... I DUNNO. I WAS THINKING MORE ALONG THE LINES OF "LEAN, BEARDED SAGITTARIUS..."
AND I WAS THINKING MORE ALONG THE LINES OF "VOLUPTUOUS, INSPIRED ARTIST..."
MAYBE YOU BOTH OUGHTA START THINKING ALONG THE LINES OF THE WANT ADS. I KNOW IT'S EASY TO FORGET, BUT THIS IS A NEWSPAPER ON DEADLINE, NOT A RESTAURANT!
YOU SHOULD TAKE OUT AN AD, ARTHUR!
YEAH! "GRUFF, BALDING FATHER FIGURE..."
"...SEEKS WILLING SLAVES!"

SERVANTS TO THE CAUSE
By Alison Bechdel
#@☆@! HOW CAN AN X-ACTO KNIFE DISAPPEAR INTO THIN AIR? I HAD IT A SECOND AGO...
GOD, I'M SO STRESSED! MY THIRD CHAKRA IS BLOCKED!
OUCH! FOUND IT! @#★!
UH-OH. BAD SIGN. ERIC'S DOING YOGA, LIZA'S LOSING IT, AND IT'S ONLY 10 AM.
NOT AT ALL! CONSIDERING THIS IS THE PRIDE ISSUE. EVERYTHING'S GOING PERFECTLY!
©1989 BY ALISON BECHDEL
GAY PRIDE! HMPH! WHO INVENTED GAY PRIDE ANYHOW, THAT'S WHAT I WANT TO KNOW.
ALL THIS WORK! EVERY YEAR THE WHOLE COMMUNITY GOES BERSERK, AND FOR WHAT? A SILLY PARADE FOR EVERYONE TO SHOW OFF THEIR LEGS AND THEIR NEW LOVERS.
YOU KIDS HAVE NO SENSE OF HISTORY! WHERE DO YOU THINK WE'D BE RIGHT NOW WITHOUT GAY PRIDE?!
WELL, I CERTAINLY WOULDN'T BE RUINING MY EYESIGHT ON THESE ENDLESS ADS FOR GAY TANNING SALONS AND LESBIAN LAWYERS, THAT'S FOR SURE!
WHAT DO WE HAVE TO BE PROUD OF ANYWAY? THE GOSSIP AND BACKBITING THAT GO ON IN THIS TOWN ALONE WOULD FUEL RONA BARRETT FOR MONTHS!
YEAH. GAYS AND LESBIANS ARE JUST AS PETTY AND BIGOTED AND MATERIALISTIC AS EVERYONE ELSE... AS IS AMPLY DEMONSTRATED TO US ALL YEAR LONG.
BUT LIZA, WHAT ABOUT THE WONDERFUL WAYS WE'RE DIFFERENT FROM THE STRAIGHT WORLD? WHAT ABOUT OUR ANDROGYNOUS AND VISIONARY SPIRITUALITY? OUR CREATIVITY? OUR HUNGER FOR JUSTICE?!
OUR CRUISES TO THE BAHAMAS, OUR POLITICAL INFIGHTING, OUR FLESTAWARE COLLECTIONS..
SO WE'RE HUMAN! THAT DOESN'T MEAN WE SHOULDN'T BE PROUD OF THE COURAGE AND LOVE THAT MADE THIS MOVEMENT WHAT IT IS TODAY!
IF THE DRAG QUEENS AT THE STONEWALL HAD YOUR ATTITUDE 20 YEARS AGO, WE'D ALL STILL BE IN THE CLOSET, WALLOWING IN REPRESSION & SHAME!
DON'T YOU LOVE TEASING THEM LIKE THIS?
THEY'RE SO CUTE WHEN THEY WAX ELOQUENT!

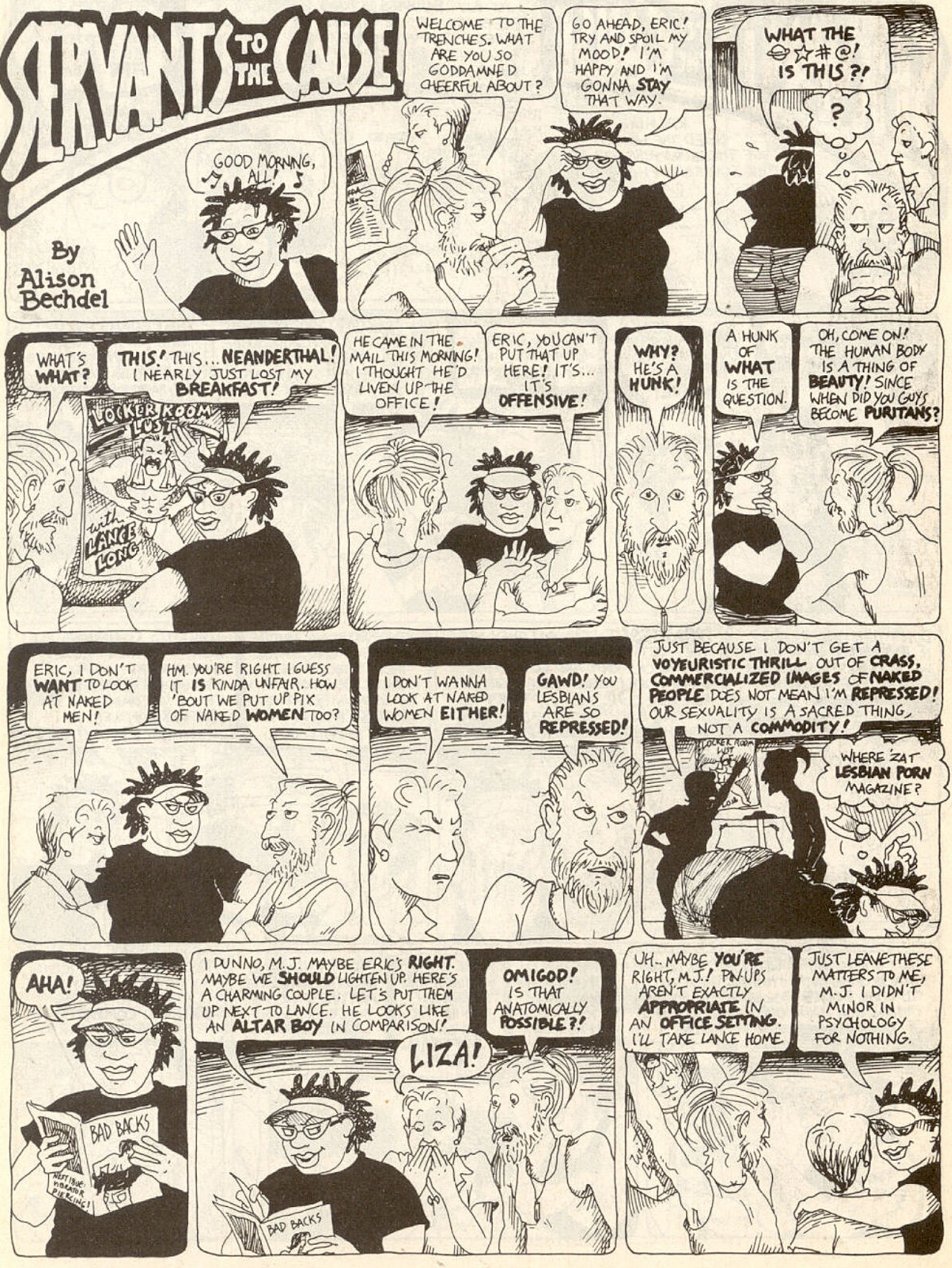
SERVANTS TO THE CAUSE
By Alison Bechdel
WHERE THE @★◎#! IS ERIC?!
BUSINESS AND PLEASURE... IS IT POLITICALLY CORRECT TO MIX THEM? PERHAPS THE CREW AT THE TEN PERCENT TRIBUNE CAN SHED SOME LIGHT ON THIS BURNING ISSUE!
HI, I'M BACK.
©1989 BY ALISON BECHDEL
FINALLY! QUICK, I NEED THE PHOTOS FROM THIS MORNING'S ACT UP DEMO!
I DON'T HAVE THEM YET.
OH, SWELL, ERIC! WHERE'VE YOU BEEN ALL DAY? OUT CRUISING IMPASSIONED YOUNG PROTESTERS?!
LIZA, I COULDN'T HELP IT, I...
OH, RIGHT! BLAME YOUR HORMONES! WELL WHILE YOU WERE OUT FOOLING AROUND, SOME OF US HAVE BEEN BUSTIN' OUR BUTTS TO GET THIS PAPER OUT!
FOR YOUR INFORMATION, MS. HOLIER-THAN-THOU, I SPENT THE AFTERNOON LANGUISHING IN JAIL FOR THE SAKE OF THIS MISERABLE PAPER! THEY ARRESTED ALL OF US!
BUT YOU WERE JUST TAKING PICTURES! OMIGOD! THE FILM! ERIC, IS THE FILM ALL RIGHT?!
OH. I'M FINE. REALLY, LIZA, YOU SHOULDN'T WORRY ABOUT ME SO MUCH. THE FILM'S OKAY. I'LL DEVELOP IT RIGHT NOW. I NEED TO MAKE A PRINT FOR ROGER BEFORE THIS EVENING, ANYHOW.
WIND WIND
ROGER?
ONE OF MY IMPASSIONED YOUNG CELL-MATES! HE INVITED ME OVER TO LICK STAMPS WITH HIM TONIGHT!
OOH! IS HE A PHILATELIST?
AND IS IT SAFE?
MAILING OUT A FUNDRAISER? I THINK SO, AS LONG AS YOU WEAR THESE LITTLE RUBBER FINGERTIPS!

SERVANTS TO THE CAUSE

By Alison Bechdel

SERVANTS TO THE CAUSE

By Alison Bechdel



SERVANTS TO THE CAUSE

By Alison Bechdel

IT FELT LIKE JUST ANOTHER WORK DAY AT THE **TEN PERCENT TRIBUNE** ... UNTIL ERIC ARRIVED.

WHAT ARE YOU **WEARING**?!

IT'S MY ANNETTE FUNICELLO OUTFIT! WHADDAYA THINK?!

I'M SORRY, GIRL... YOU JUST **DON'T** HAVE THE LEGS.

AND WHAT YOU **HAVE** YOU SHOULDA **SHAVED**.

NITPICKERS! I NOTICE NONE OF **YOU** DRESSED FOR HALLOWEEN. WHAT KIND OF SELF-RESPECTING QUEERS **ARE** YOU, ANYWAY?!

·615·

WELL I FOR ONE AM OFFENDED BY YOUR GET-UP, ERIC!

JEEZ, MAYBE I **SHOULDA** SHAVED MY LEGS.

DRAG IS **OFFENSIVE** TO WOMEN! IT MOCKS FEMININE TRAITS AND GLORIFIES THE WAYS WOMEN HAVE BEEN OBJECTIFIED AND OPPRESSED FOR **CENTURIES**.

LIGHTEN UP, M.J.! IT'S FUN! IT'S CAMP! IT'S **GENDER-FUCK**! WHY DO YOU ALWAYS HAVE TO BE SO RIGID?!

IT'S DISRESPECTFUL!

HON **NO ONE** COULD RESPECT ANNETTE MORE THAN ME! I'VE BEEN DRESSING UP LIKE HER SINCE I WAS **FOUR**!

BESIDES, WHO SAYS WOMEN ARE THE ONLY ONES WHO GET TO WEAR GARISH MAKE-UP, RIDICULOUS HAIRDOS, AND ABSURD CLOTHING?!

YEAH!

DRAG IS A NOBLE AND ANCIENT **FAERIE RITUAL**! A RADICAL **SLAP** IN THE **FACE** OF TRADITIONAL, **PATRIARCHAL VALUES**!

HUH. Y'KNOW, I NEVER THOUGHT OF IT LIKE THAT.

OOOH, GIRLFRIEND! ARE THOSE YOUR **TITS** OR DID YOU DROP TWO STUFFED **MUSHROOMS** DOWN YOUR BLOUSE?!!

WHAT? YOU DON'T LIKE MY PATTI LA BELLE?

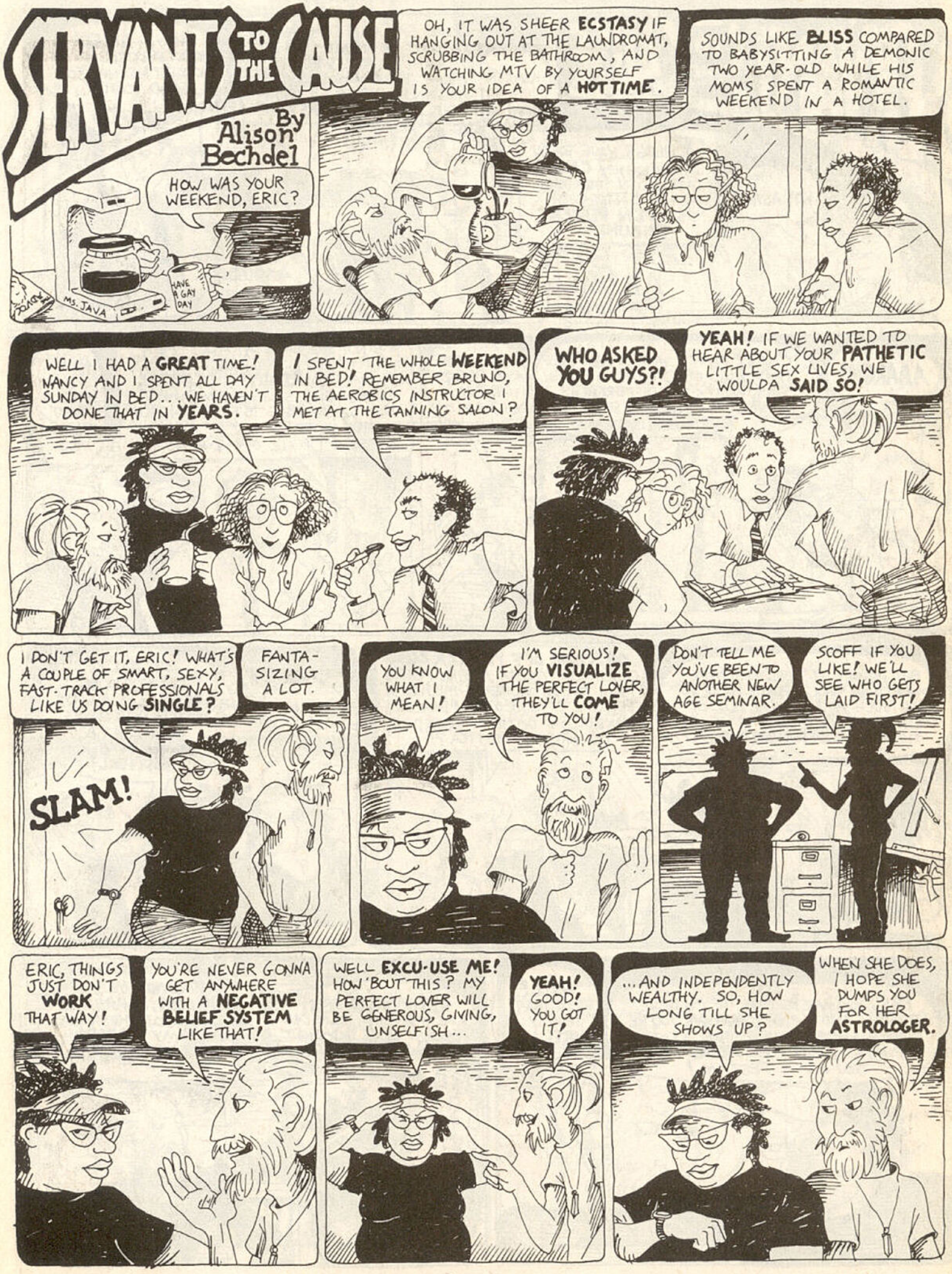
ON THE OTHER HAND...

SERVANTS TO THE CAUSE
By Alison Bechdel
IT'S THE LULL AFTER DEADLINE AS WE JOIN THE INTREPID STAFF OF THE TEN PERCENT TRIBUNE...
GODDESS, I WISH I'D START BLEEDING SOON!
ME TOO, RACHEL. YOU'RE A ROYAL PAIN IN THE BUTT WHEN YOU'RE PREMENSTRUAL.
MUST YOU TWO DISCUSS YOUR BODILY FUNCTIONS IN PUBLIC?
WHATSA MATTER, ARTHUR? SQUEAMISH? OR ARE YOU THREATENED BY OUR ELEMENTAL CONNECTION TO THE FORCES OF NATURE?
I JUST THINK THOSE THINGS ARE PERSONAL, THAT'S ALL.
YOU'D RATHER WE KEPT OUR SHAMEFUL BIOLOGICAL CYCLES TO OURSELVES, HUH?
I HAVEN'T HEARD YOU COMPLAIN ABOUT THE ENDLESS DISCUSSION OF MALE BODILY FUNCTIONS THAT GOES ON IN THIS OFFICE.
OH, SO NOW I'M BEING SEXIST, RIGHT?
ARTHUR, YOU SOUND LIKE YOU'RE ON THE RAG!
©1989 BY ALISON BECHDEL
HEY, MAYBE YOU ARE ARTHUR! I KNOW I HAVE PMS SOMETIMES!
OH, PUH-LEEZE ERIC!
WELL I DO! MEN'S BODIES HAVE HORMONAL RHYTHMS TOO, Y'KNOW!
I'M SO SURE. YOU GUYS HAVE TO GET IN ON EVERYTHING, DON'T YOU?
HEY, I'M NOT TRYING TO APPROPRIATE YOUR COLLECTIVE FEMALE EXPERIENCE... I JUST THINK IT HELPS TO FOCUS ON OUR SIMILARITIES RATHER THAN OUR DIFFERENCES.
UH-OH.
WHAT?!
ERIC, YOU WOULDN'T HAPPEN TO HAVE AN EXTRA TAMPON I COULD BORROW, WOULD YOU?

SERVANTS TO THE CAUSE

By Alison Bechdel

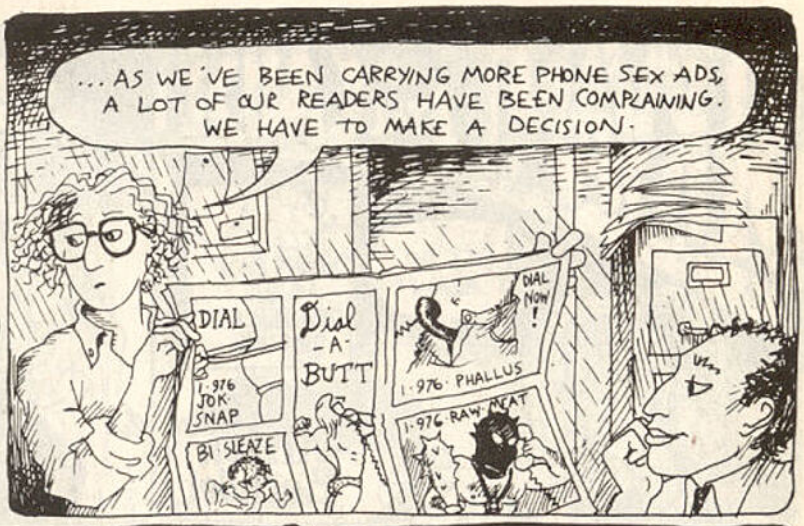
SERVANTS TO THE CAUSE
By Alison Bechdel
WAS NOT!
WAS TOO!
YOU ARE A DOGMATIC, MANHATING FUNDAMENTALIST!
AND YOU HAVE THE POLITICAL SENSIBILITY OF A CALVIN KLEIN UNDERWEAR AD!
UH-OH. PERSONALITY CONFLICT!
WHOSE TURN IS IT TO FACILITATE?
ARTHUR'S!
OH NO IT'S NOT! I JUST FACILITATED THAT HEATED DEBATE BETWEEN ERIC AND RACHEL OVER SERIAL COMMAS!
AND RIGHT AFTER THAT, I MEDIATED M.J. AND LIZA'S DISCUSSION ON WHY WE RUN FREE ADS FOR OFF OUR BACKS AND NOT ON OUR BACKS.
WELL, IT CAN'T BE MY TURN. IT WAS ONLY LAST WEEK THAT I NEGOTIATED ERIC AND JULIO'S DISPUTE OVER HOW TO CROP THAT GRAPHIC FOR THE BEEFY BUNS CALENDAR REVIEW!
©1989 BY ALISON BECHDEL
DON'T LOOK AT ME! I HANDLED THE LITTLE FRACAS OVER NEATNESS STANDARDS JUST THIS MORNING! REMEMBER?
WAIT... MAYBE IT'S MY TURN! I HAVEN'T FACILITATED SINCE THE BIG FUSS OVER WHETHER COVERING THE GAY RODEO WOULD OFFEND THE ANIMAL RIGHTS ACTIVISTS!
DON'T BE SILLY! YOU CAN'T FACILITATE YOUR OWN CONFLICT!
OH ALL RIGHT! I'LL DO IT! WHAT ARE YOU FIGHTING ABOUT?
GEE... WAS IT THE SUGGESTIVE COPY FOR THAT REAL ESTATE AD?
NO... THAT WAS FRIDAY. MAYBE IT WAS MY EDITING ON THE INTERVIEW WITH THE WINNER OF THE WET JOCKEY SHORTS CONTEST?
DO YOU THINK IT WOULD VIOLATE THE BASIC TENETS OF THE COLLECTIVE PROCESS IF WE JUST SMACKED THEIR HEADS TOGETHER?

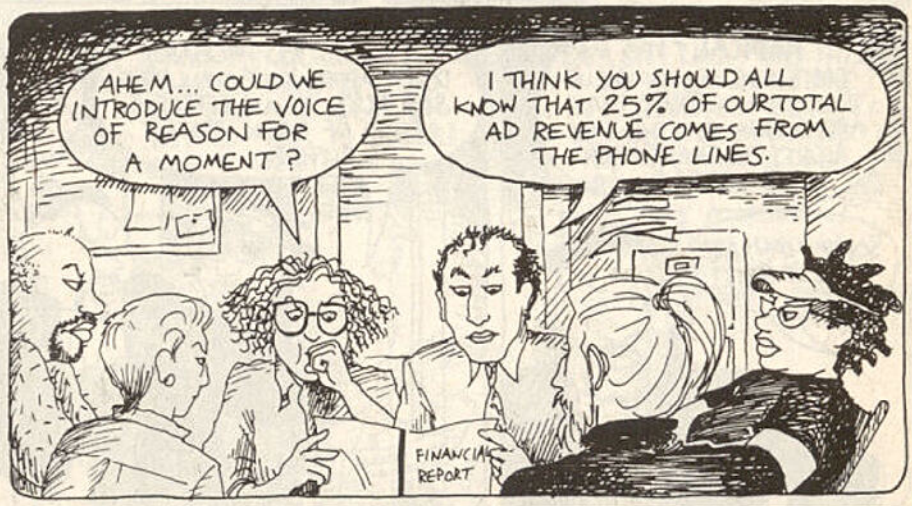

SERVANTS TO THE CAUSE
By Alison Bechdel
HOW WAS YOUR WEEKEND, ERIC?
MS. JAVA
HAVE A GAY DAY
OH, IT WAS SHEER ECSTASY IF HANGING OUT AT THE LAUNDROMAT, SCRUBBING THE BATHROOM, AND WATCHING MTV BY YOURSELF IS YOUR IDEA OF A HOT TIME.
SOUNDS LIKE BLISS COMPARED TO BABYSITTING A DEMONIC TWO YEAR-OLD WHILE HIS MOMS SPENT A ROMANTIC WEEKEND IN A HOTEL.
WELL I HAD A GREAT TIME! NANCY AND I SPENT ALL DAY SUNDAY IN BED... WE HAVEN'T DONE THAT IN YEARS.
I SPENT THE WHOLE WEEKEND IN BED! REMEMBER BRUNO, THE AEROBICS INSTRUCTOR I MET AT THE TANNING SALON?
WHO ASKED YOU GUYS?!
YEAH! IF WE WANTED TO HEAR ABOUT YOUR PATHETIC LITTLE SEX LIVES, WE WOULDA SAID SO!
I DON'T GET IT, ERIC! WHAT'S A COUPLE OF SMART, SEXY, FAST-TRACK PROFESSIONALS LIKE US DOING SINGLE?
FANTA-SIZING A LOT.
SLAM!
YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN!
I'M SERIOUS! IF YOU VISUALIZE THE PERFECT LOVER, THEY'LL COME TO YOU!
DON'T TELL ME YOU'VE BEEN TO ANOTHER NEW AGE SEMINAR.
SCOFF IF YOU LIKE! WE'LL SEE WHO GETS LAID FIRST!
ERIC, THINGS JUST DON'T WORK THAT WAY!
YOU'RE NEVER GONNA GET ANYWHERE WITH A NEGATIVE BELIEF SYSTEM LIKE THAT!
WELL EXCU-USE ME! HOW 'BOUT THIS? MY PERFECT LOVER WILL BE GENEROUS, GIVING, UNSELFISH...
YEAH! GOOD! YOU GOT IT!
...AND INDEPENDENTLY WEALTHY. SO, HOW LONG TILL SHE SHOWS UP?
WHEN SHE DOES, I HOPE SHE DUMPS YOU FOR HER ASTROLOGER.

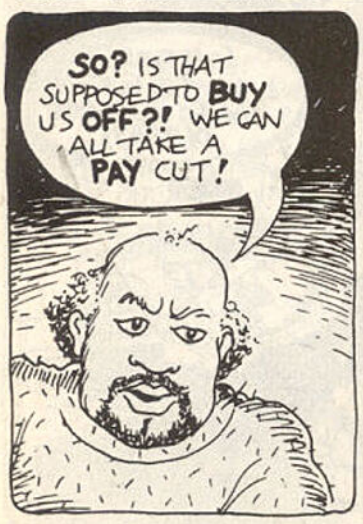
SERVANTS TO THE CAUSE
By Alison Bechdel
NOT AGAIN!
THINGS HAVE BEEN SUSPICIOUSLY CALM LATELY IN THE DUTY-BOUND OFFICES OF THE TEN PERCENT TRIBUNE...
WHAT?
SOME GAY MAN COMPLAINING ABOUT A WOMEN-ONLY CRAFT FAIR... WHINING ABOUT BEING DISCRIMINATED AGAINST. DIDN'T WE HASH THIS ALL OUT YEARS AGO?
HEY, I LIKED THAT ARTICLE! I THOUGHT HE HAD SOME GOOD POINTS!
AAARGH!
C'MON! AREN'T WOMEN ABOVE THAT KIND OF EXCLUSION? I MEAN, WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WOMEN-ONLY SPACE AND ALL-MALE CLUBS?!
YOU HAVE A POINT THERE, JULIO.
IT'S NOT THE SAME AT ALL! MEN TAKE UP MORE THAN THEIR SHARE OF SPACE ALREADY! IT'S CRUCIAL TO WOMEN'S SELF-EMPOWERMENT THAT WE BE ABLE TO FOCUS ON EACH OTHER WITHOUT A LOT OF MEN SOAKING UP ALL OUR ENERGY!
HMM... YOU HAVE A POINT THERE, M.J.
BUT DOESN'T IT GIVE MEN MORE POWER THAN THEY ALREADY HAVE TO MAKE SUCH A BIG DEAL OUT OF THEIR PRESENCE? WHAT IF WE LET THEM IN, THEN IGNORED THEM?
OH, COME OFF IT, LIZA! HOW COULD YOU IGNORE A BUNCH OF MEN AT A WOMEN'S MUSIC FESTIVAL? WOULD YOU DANCE NAKED OR GO TO A WORKSHOP ON WRITING EROTICA?!
WELL...
WHY NOT?! I THINK IT'D BE GREAT! I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO DANCE NAKED AT A WOMEN'S MUSIC FESTIVAL!
ERIC, YOU MAY BE ONE OF MY BEST FRIENDS, AND GODDESS KNOWS YOU'RE MORE HIGHLY EVOLVED THAN A LOT OF MEN... BUT I'D FEEL WEIRD WITH YOU AT A FESTIVAL!
WELL! WELL THAT REALLY HURTS, LIZA!
GET OVER IT, ERIC. SOMETIMES THE POLITICAL IS JUST MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE PERSONAL.
FINE WITH ME! YOUR LOSS, AS ANYONE WILL TELL YOU WHO'S EVER SEEN MY ISADORA DUNCAN IMPERSONATION!

SERVANTS TO THE CAUSE

By Alison Bechdel

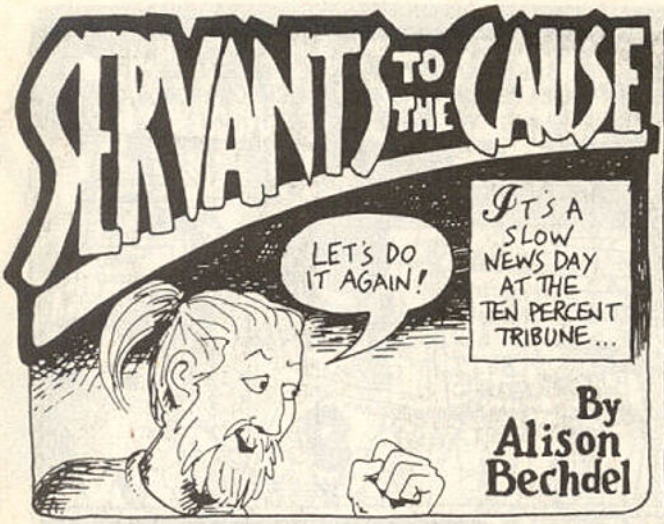


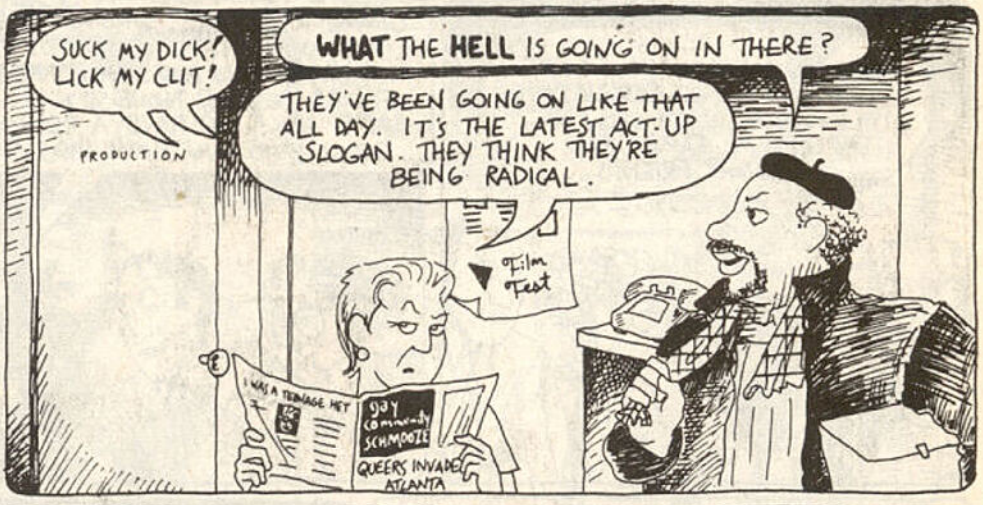


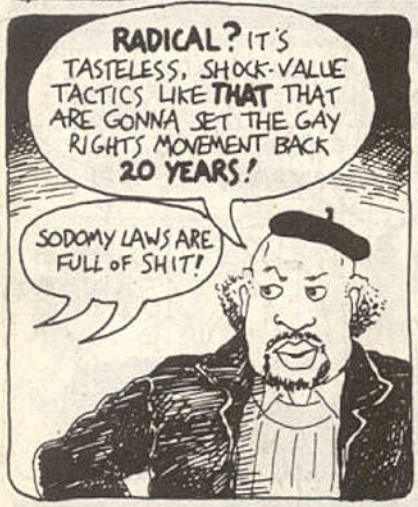


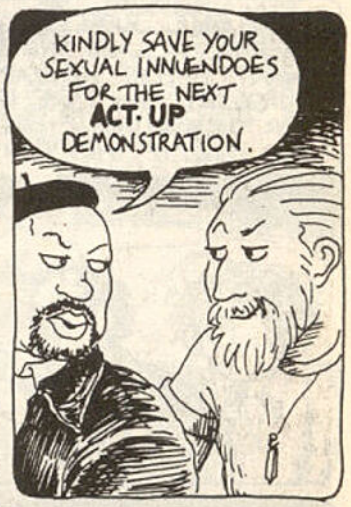
SERVANTS TO THE CAUSE

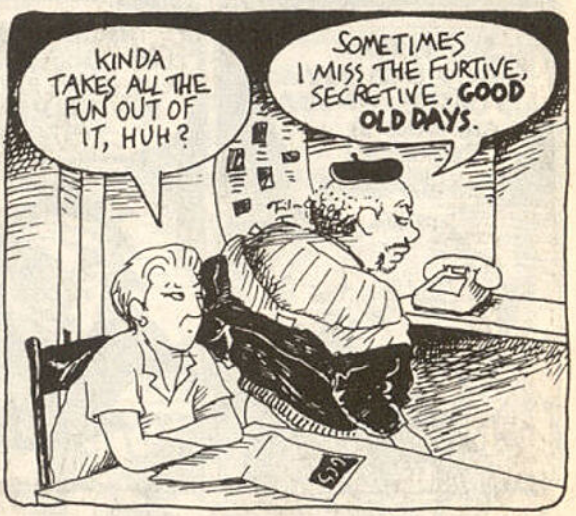
By Alison Bechdel











SERVANTS TO THE CAUSE
By Alison Bechdel
SAME TO YOU!
NO LUCK?
NO. HER MANAGER SAYS IF WE WANTED AN INTERVIEW WE SHOULDA SET IT UP AHEAD OF TIME.
BUT WE TRIED! NO ONE WOULD RETURN OUR CALLS!
ERIC, WHAT'S WITH THE COWBOY DRAG? YOU LOOK ALMOST BUTCH.
WE'RE GOING TO THE J.T. CHAPRIDGE CONCERT TONIGHT. YOU KNOW, THAT HOT NEW COUNTRY-WESTERN SINGER.
WE'VE BEEN TRYING TO SET UP AN INTERVIEW WITH HER FOR WEEKS, BUT NO DICE.
J.T. CHAPRIDGE! WHAT A HEARTTHROB! SHE HAD INTERVIEWS IN BOTH THE DISTRESS AND THE WEEKLY VOICE TODAY! SHE'S SUCH A DYKE!
Weekly Voice
J.T. CHAPRIDGE!
WHAT? DID SHE SAY SO?
OF COURSE NOT! BUT LOOK AT HER! AND IF YOU READ BETWEEN THE LINES, YOU CAN JUST TELL!
BULLETIN BOARD
THAT REALLY PISSES ME OFF! I'M TIRED OF READING BETWEEN THE LINES! HALF HER ADORING, RECORD-BUYING PUBLIC IS QUEER! SHE COULD AT LEAST GIVE US AN INTERVIEW!
DREAM ON, LIZA! YOU THINK THAT BIG RECORD LABEL SHE'S WITH IS GONNA LET HER TALK TO THE GAY & LESBIAN PRESS? THEY DON'T WANNA RISK RECORD SALES! BESIDES, WE KNOW SHE'S A LESBIAN!
ISN'T THAT WHAT REALLY MATTERS?
NO! JUST FOR ONCE I'D LIKE TO SEE A FAMOUS PERSON HAVE THE PRIDE AND INTEGRITY TO COME OUT PUBLICLY!
WELL I DON'T CARE IF SHE WEARS A COAT MADE OF BABY SEALS AND OWNS STOCK IN A NUCLEAR BOMB FACTORY! SHE'S SEXY AS HELL.
YOU'RE PATHETIC, RACHEL.
WHY DON'T YOU PUT YOUR MONEY WHERE YOUR MOUTH IS AND GIVE HER YOUR TICKET, THEN, MS. PRIDE AND INTEGRITY?
WHY DON'T YOU DRINK A SIX-PACK OF COORS AND GO ROPE A STEER, BUCKAROO?

SERVANTS TO THE CAUSE
THANK GOD! YOU'RE ALL STILL HERE!
ERIC IS SUFFERING FROM A TOUCH OF ASSIMILATION ANXIETY.
I HAD THE MOST HORRIBLE DREAM LAST NIGHT!
Finance meeting wed 4:30
NOT THE RECURRENT NIGHTMARE WHERE YOU JUMP OUT OF THE CAKE AT THE AMERICAN LEGION BANQUET HALL?
NEWSTIME
THE FUTURE OF STRAIGHT LOOKING PROFESSIONAL WHITE GAY MEN IN AMERICA
NO... THIS WAS MUCH, MUCH WORSE... IT HAPPENED IN THE FUTURE, A HUNDRED YEARS FROM NOW... AND HOMOPHOBIA HAD BECOME OBSOLETE!
BUT THAT SOUNDS LIKE A GREAT DREAM!
OOOH, IT WAS JUST TERRIBLE! IT WAS TOTALLY ACCEPTABLE TO BE GAY, OR LESBIAN, OR BISEXUAL, OR WHATEVER! NOBODY CARED!
THERE WERE TV SITCOMS ABOUT MARRIED GAY COUPLES AND THEIR CHILDREN! OPENLY LESBIAN TENNIS STARS CAVORTED ON WHEATIES BOXES!
WHAT'S SO HORRIBLE ABOUT THAT?
THERE WERE NO MORE GAY BARS OR CLUBS BECAUSE PEOPLE COULD SOCIALIZE ANYWHERE THEY LIKED WITHOUT BEING HARASSED!
ALL THE GAY CHURCHES AND SYNAGOGUES AND PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS HAD FOLDED BECAUSE THERE WAS NO NEED FOR THEM ANYMORE!
AND WORST OF ALL, THERE WERE NO MORE LESBIAN AND GAY NEWSPAPERS OR PUBLISHERS BECAUSE THE MAINSTREAM PRESS STARTED PRINTING ALL THE QUEER WRITERS!
JEEZ, THAT IS PRETTY SCARY.
IT DOESN'T SOUND SO BAD TO ME! AFTER ALL, ISN'T THAT WHAT WE'RE FIGHTING FOR? THE RIGHT TO BE LIKE EVERYONE ELSE?
WHAT?! EXCUSE ME, BUT ARE WE IN THE SAME POLITICAL MOVEMENT?
MAYBE YOU WANNA BE A SITCOM CHARACTER, ARTHUR, BUT THE LAST THING I WANT IS TO BE LIKE EVERYONE ELSE!
SOMEHOW, I DON'T THINK YOU TWO HAVE ANY THING TO WORRY ABOUT.
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IN MEMORIUM

Jerry Mills, 41, creator of the internationally published gay comics strip, "Poppers," died January 28, 1993, of complications from a long battle with HIV. He is survived by his longtime life partner, Sal Lucarello.

"Poppers" featured the Los Angeles-based comic/erotic exploits of Billy (a dumb blond party boy who never had to work hard at love, life, or looks), his pal Yves Arden (a play on the classic movie roles of actress Eve Arden who was typecast as a tragic wisecracking sidekick to the main love interest), their third wheel André laFayette (soul child of Grace Jones; cool wise, and with fabulous good taste), and Buster Crab (a louse with an attitude living in Billy's crotch).

"Poppers" began April 1982 in *In Touch Magazine for Men*, a gay monthly featuring photo spreads of nude valley dudes and erotic short stories. Jerry was working there in the subscriptions department when then editor John Calendo encouraged him to create a regular sex comic to sandwich between the buns and the beefcake.

Drawing a sex comic during the dusk of the sexual revolution under the advent of AIDS pulled Jerry between the pressure of pleasing the publisher's dictates against material perceived as being sex negative, and the changing realities of the AIDS pandemic that tore apart the sexual fantasy which sold *In Touch.*

Reading through Jerry's strips in succession is a chilling diary of the holocaust that exploded within the Gay community during the 1980's. Against odds that would suck dry most creative energy wells, Jerry created stories that were funny, sexual, and totally relevant to their times.

As an artist, Jerry continuously honed his abilities, refining his line and skill to sharp comic strip perfection. This evolving growth imbued a life to Jerry's iconoclastic cast of characters that few master cartoonists have achieved.

In the mid-1980's, "Poppers" was translated and published in the French gay weekly magazine, *Gai Pied Hebdo*, and in the Japanese monthly magazine, *Barazoko.* ***Gay Comix* #6** cover-featured the cast of "Poppers," while ***Gay Comix* #9** (both still available) collected the cream of Jerry's early "Poppers" strips.

While at *In Touch*, Jerry contributed numerous spot illustrations and alternative comic plugs, and wrote an article on gays in the comics (#85, 11/'83), a history of early male physique magazines (#97, 11/'84), and an interview with gay cartoonist Howard Cruse (#114, 5'86). Jerry also wrote an 8-page history of gays in comics for the first *Meatmen* book published by Leyland Publications in 1986.

In Touch laid Jerry off in 1987. The magazine was suffering from recession, lawsuits, shrinking advertising base, and America's rabid conservative swing into right-wing horror shows. Jerry then got a job in the classifieds department at *Advocate MEN*, which then sporadically printed "Poppers" until editorial indecision and growing health complications forced Jerry to lay down his pens in his prime.

Jerry appeared for a ***Gay Comics*** signing at the Different Light bookstore in West Hollywood in early 1992, enjoying visiting with his fans and fellow cartoonists. Jerry died before he was able to seriously interest any publishing house to print the complete anthology collection of "Poppers."

Sometimes Jerry's experiences so closely mirrored my own in both life and the comic world that I feel a unique kinship with him which is now a hole cut right through me. The following is from Jerry's introduction to *Meatmen* #1:

"Gay comic artists face the quandary of how to deal with a delicate situation that threatens to undermine all that went before. Some choose to ignore it, knowing that sex and humor are basics of human nature. Others . . . deal with the phenomenon straight on. The double-edged sword of daring to tackle the AIDS crisis in what is essentially a humor and sex medium is that one cannot ignore so pervasive a reality, nor can one easily deal with it without possibly alienating an entire audience. How gay comic artists resolve this promises unique solutions, but whatever the results, we can all be assured of the resiliency of the human spirit."

-- Carl Vaughn Frick

JERRY MILLS
1951-1993

ALISON BECHDEL

Alison Bechdel was born in 1960 to a pair of English teachers in rural Pennsylvania. As soon as possible, she went away to college, came out, and moved to New York City. It was there, in 1982, that she began drawing a series of deranged "dykes to watch out for," chiefly for her own amusement. Her first published cartoon appeared in 1983, in the New York City newspaper, *WomaNews*.

After contributing to *WomaNews* for two years, Bechdel began to self-syndicate her comic strip. ***Dykes To Watch Out For*** runs in over 40 gay/lesbian, feminist, and progressive papers in the U.S., Canada, and the U.K.

In 1988, Bechdel created another strip called "Servants to the Cause," about the staff of a queer newspaper. This strip ran in *The Advocate*, along with **Tim Barela**'s strip, "Leonard & Larry," and **Gerard Donelan**'s "It's A Gay Life," until 1990, when the magazine decided to stop running serial cartoons. That was the end of "Servants to the Cause," but all nineteen episodes are collected in this issue of ***Gay Comics***.

In 1986, Firebrand Books published the first collection of Bechdel's cartoons. Four books have been published to date, along with an annual calendar featuring new work. The fifth book, *Spawn of Dykes to Watch Out For*, is due out in the fall of 1993. Bechdel's third collection, *New, Improved! Dykes to Watch Out For*, won a 1990 Lambda Literary Award, and, as this issue was being typeset, her *Dykes to Watch Out For: The Sequel*, won a 1992 Lambda Literary Award!

Bechdel's cartoons have also appeared in *Real Girl*, *American Splendor*, *Wimmen's Comix*, *Ms.*, *The Village Voice*, and the still-available *Gay Comix* #10.

Don't Miss Alison Bechdel's 4 Cartoon Collections

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and now for a few words about ALISON BECHDEL. . .

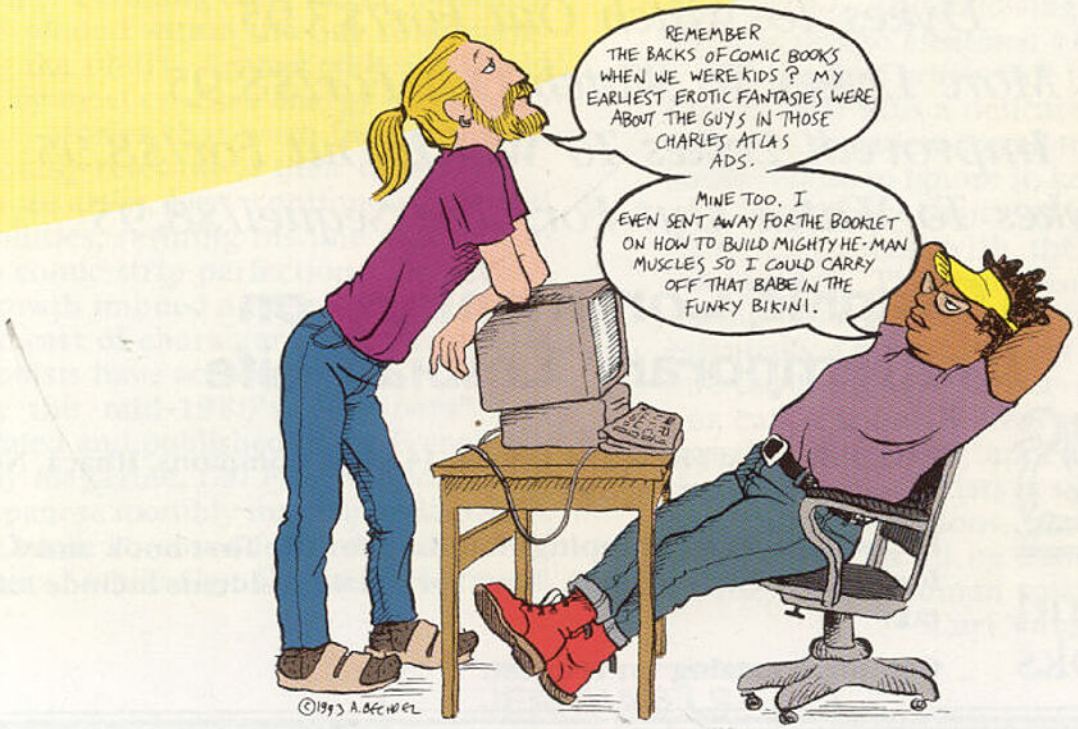
"The first time an Alison Bechdel comic strip crossed my path I thought, 'Wow! That woman's gonna be a star!' Then I found out that among lesbians she already was one."

-- **Howard Cruse, *Barefootz, Wendel***

"I can't imagine why any dyke wouldn't want to own everything that Alison Bechdel has ever done. I myself possess several priceless tape recordings of things she has said in her sleep (just kidding, Alison). Even if you're not a dyke, get this comic. It'll make *you* a servant to the cause!"

-- **Pat Califia, *The Advocate Adviser, Macho Sluts***

Alison Bechdel
creator of four best-selling
Dykes To Watch Out For books
presents 40 stunning pages!

Thrill to her "Coming Out Story!" ***Gasp*** at her parochial school upbringing in "The Power of Prayer!" ***Shriek*** as you read her sordid "True Confessions." Then, get ***intimate*** with the workers at a gay newspaper in "Servants To The Cause."

Cheaper than another pair of Birkenstocks, and ***funnier*** too!